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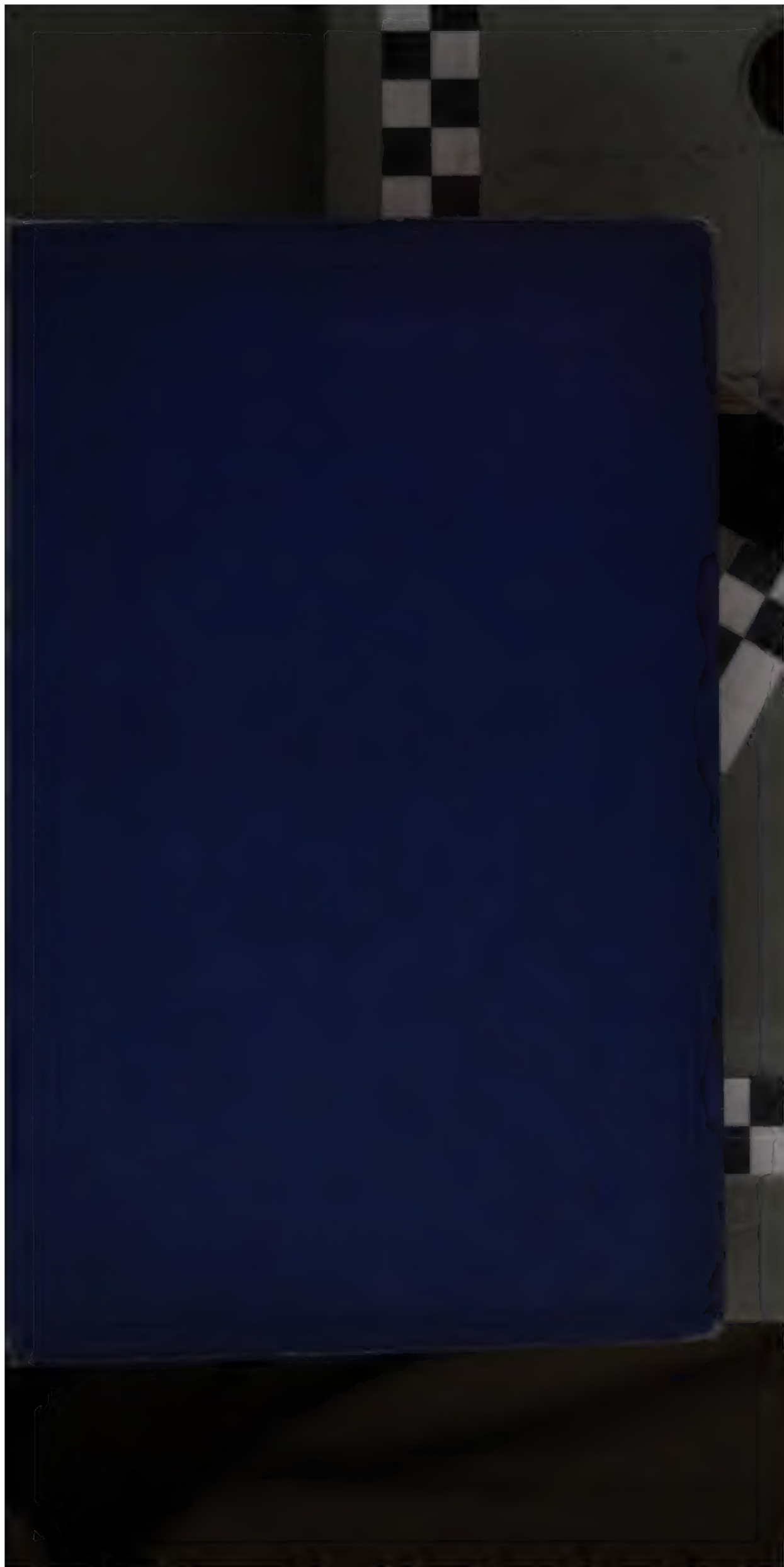
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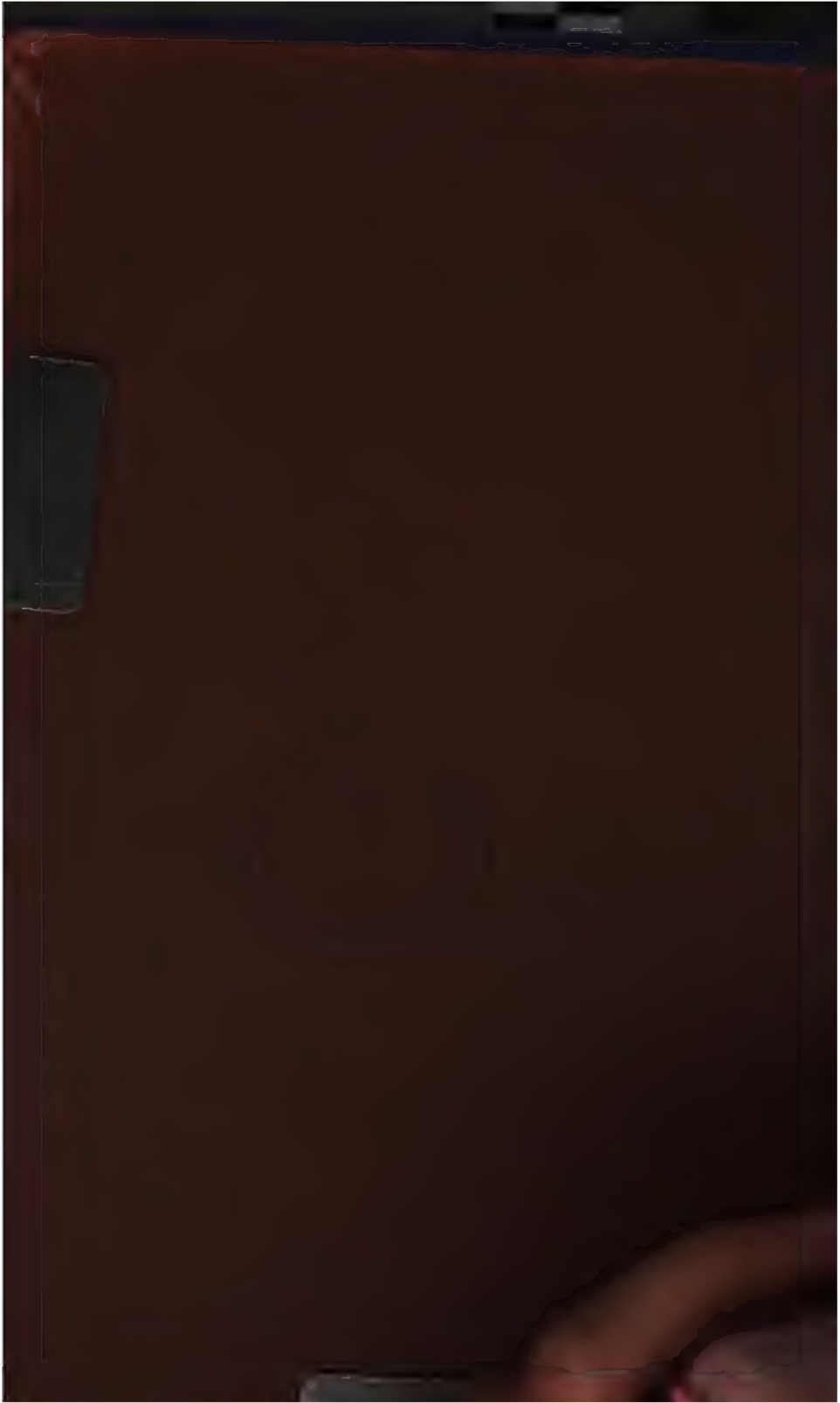
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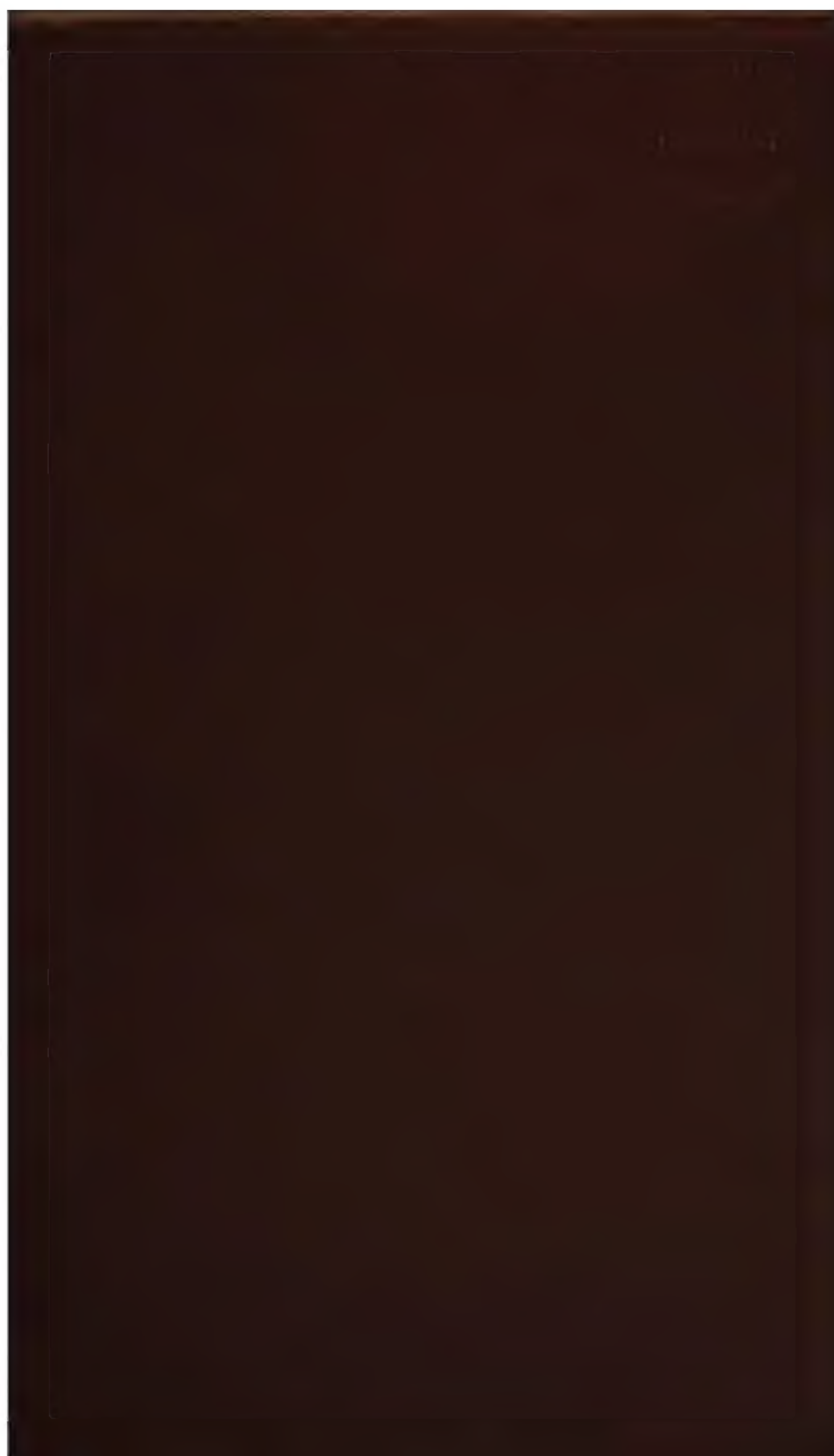
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1840





THE  
LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION  
OF  
ROBERT BANKS,  
SECOND EARL OF LIVERPOOL, K.G.  
LATE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.

*COMPILED FROM ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.*

BY  
CHARLES DUKE YONGE,  
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST;  
AND AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY," "THE HISTORY OF FRANCE  
UNDER THE BOURBONS," ETC.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.*

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1868.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following work is founded almost entirely on the correspondence and copies of correspondence left behind him by Lord Liverpool, and now in the possession of Colonel and Lady Catharine Harcourt, of Buxted Park, Sussex, who have done me the honour of entrusting the documents to me for the purpose of compiling an account of his most eventful career. From the suddenness of the calamity which terminated his Administration his papers were not found to be so completely arranged but that some letters have been lost; and for some of those which he wrote to Mr. Vansittart (afterwards Lord Bexley), and to Mr. Canning, I have been indebted to the kindness of their representatives, Mr. John Thornton and Lord Canning Burke, to whom I take this opportunity of acknowledging the great obligations under which their courtesy has thus laid me.

C. D. Y.



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# *THE LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION*

OF

## LORD LIVERPOOL.

### CHAPTER I.

Importance of the period at which Lord Liverpool became minister—Early history of his father—His care of his son's education—Mr. Jenkinson at Oxford—His friendship with Canning and others—He travels on the Continent—Opening of the French Revolution—Mr. Jenkinson is returned for Appleby—His maiden speech—He visits the allied armies on the Rhine—Letters to his father from Coblenz—Proceedings of the French emigrants—Feelings of the Austrians and Prussians—He supports the war with France—He opposes Mr. Grey's motion for Reform—He becomes a member of the India Board.

THE statesman whose memoirs I have undertaken to present to his countrymen, having been a Secretary of State for above ten years, governed this nation as Prime Minister for fifteen more. Since the time of Lord Burleigh no one, except the second Pitt, ever enjoyed so long a tenure of power; with the same exception, no one ever held office at so critical a time; for the period at which he was suddenly called on to wield the supreme authority was that at which the most momentous and arduous war in which Britain had ever been engaged was assuming new features, through the brilliant successes of Wellington in Spain, and the gigantic invasion of Russia by Napoleon;

both events calling for increased and extended exertions, differing in character and in the capacity which they required, but similar in the vast influence which, if well directed, they were calculated to exert on the present and future fortunes, not only of this nation, but of the whole of Christendom. Our own warlike triumphs imposed on us the necessity of redoubling the efforts by which they had been gained, and of so strengthening the resources of our invincible general as to enable him to reap and secure the full fruit of his great achievements. The fresh and insane aggressions of the French Emperor, turning into enemies those who had previously been the most enthusiastic and firm of his friends, no less re-opened to us the field of diplomatic labour to confirm them in their hostility to him, and thus to regain them to our side, and to reinforce them with others who were not only still his allies, and were at that moment furnishing one division of his invading army, but who were also bound to him by family connexions of the closest kind, which, but a few months before, had seemed, as he clearly intended and expected them to prove, indissoluble.

Nor when the generals, lavishly but judiciously supported, and the diplomatists, sagaciously directed and carrying out their instructions with consummate ability, had brought the war to a termination of glory unequalled even in the proudest days of Edward or of Anne, were the toils and anxieties of the minister at an end. The return of peace, glorious as it was, only brought with it cares and labours of a different kind, not less burthensome than those of war, and at least equally involving the reputation of the statesman and the welfare of the people. So protracted and vital a struggle as that through which the nation had passed could not be suddenly brought to a close without its cessation producing a perilous reaction. It was necessary to revise the whole financial system of the kingdom; and a return to old principles and methods, however indispensable, could not be effected without causing a great shock to

interests and habits which had grown up during the long period of their interruption. There was therefore inevitably, as is now generally admitted, severe distress; the distress was, by an equally inevitable consequence, the parent of fierce discontent (bordering on sedition); which could only be allayed by a judicious mixture of firmness and conciliation, guided by a sagacious appreciation of the existing influences which swayed the popular feelings, and by a penetrating foresight of the future requirements of the country, in order, by a timely and progressive development of its resources, gradually to heal the wounds inflicted on it by a war of unexampled length; and to place it in a position to secure its full share of that general prosperity which the re-establishment of peace was sure eventually to open to the whole world. During the twelve years which followed the restoration of peace all these ends were secured. After more than one most perilous crisis distress was extinguished; discontent was appeased. Our financiers, aided by our diplomatists, were active and successful in opening fresh channels for our commerce; and the beginning of 1827 saw the kingdom in the enjoyment of a degree of present prosperity and renown which had never been surpassed, and resting with a well-grounded confidence on the hopes of a steady augmentation of even that felicity.

The chief means by which these great objects were accomplished I shall attempt to describe in the following pages. And one other preliminary remark will not be out of place, that the minister who advised them is, with his colleagues, fully and solely entitled to the credit of all those measures, and all their fruits. He does not divide it with his opponents, nor with any party but his own. He is the very last minister who has been able fully to carry out his own political views; who has been so strong that in matters of general policy the Opposition could extort no concessions from him which were not sanctioned by his own deliberate judgment; the very last who, in

the strict sense of the word, can be said to have governed England. On that most brilliant statesman who succeeded him, death laid his hand too speedily to allow any of the designs which he may have formed for the internal government of the kingdom to be developed ; and the measure for which Wellington's administration is now chiefly remembered was forced upon him by events, sorely against his will and convictions. Similar compulsion exacted Lord Grey's assent to many of the details of the Reform Bill, which he was as far from approving as from having premeditated ; and the Reform Bill, to the carrying of which he devoted all his energies, and on which he staked all his reputation, however well judged and fortunate in many respects its results may have been, has unquestionably had the effect, which the Duke of Wellington seems to have been the only statesman who foresaw at the time, of rendering the Government permanently and incurably weak ; so that since his day there has been no prime minister who has not found himself compelled to consent to, and even at times to adopt and promote measures inconsistent with his previous professions, adverse to his notions of general policy, and condemned, or at least dreaded, by his deliberate judgment.

ROBERT BANKS JENKINSON, the eldest son of the first Earl of Liverpool, was born on the 7th of June, 1770. His father was not yet a peer, but was steadily making his way to that promotion. During the administration of Lord Bute he had been that nobleman's private secretary, and, in the political struggles which followed on the resignation of the favourite earl, he became an active member of the small party known as the King's friends. The Duke of Grafton made him a Lord of the Admiralty, and in 1778, under Lord North, he rose to the more important and laborious office of Secretary at War, undertaking his new duties at the very moment when the refusal of the American Congress to treat for peace on any other conditions

but those of a formal recognition of the independence of the United States rendered it certain that the war would shortly assume a sterner character, while the surrender of Burgoyne in the preceding year had greatly strengthened the opponents of the ministry in Parliament, by the proof which it supplied that, at so great a distance from home, it was difficult to follow up success, while defeat must lead to further and more ignominious disaster. When, three years afterwards, it was at length acknowledged that any further prosecution of the attempt to subdue the colonists was hopeless, no one attributed our failure to any want of energy on Mr. Jenkinson's part, who had been unwearied in his efforts to furnish the army with reinforcements and supplies, and as successful in his exertions as the distance to which they were to be sent permitted. But the duties of this office were not those most to his taste; matters connected with finance and commerce were his favourite study; and it was greatly to his satisfaction that, on the dissolution of the Coalition Ministry, Mr. Pitt proposed to him to join his government as a member of the Board of Trade. In framing the commercial treaty which shortly afterwards was concluded between Great Britain and the United States, he was the minister's principal assistant; and with his own fondness for those subjects, and with the enlightened and liberal ideas upon them which he shared with Mr. Pitt, he early imbued his son, who, in more than one of his latest measures, showed that he had not forgotten his teaching. In 1786 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Hawkesbury, and ten years later he received the further promotion of the earldom of Liverpool; the title of Hawkesbury descending by courtesy to his heir, who was known by it during the earlier part of his official life.

Proud of the position to which he had raised himself by his political exertions and abilities, he from the first seems to have destined his eldest son to a similar career, estimating with a parental, but not exaggerated, partiality

the talents of which he flattered himself that he saw the promise, and being led by the expectations which he thus formed of him to urge upon him with especial earnestness the necessity of cultivating his abilities by the most diligent study. When his son was old enough for a public school, he placed him at the Charterhouse, and a letter which is preserved from him to the boy when he was but little more than fourteen is creditable to both of them : to the father from the soundness of the judgment with which he suggests to him both the benefits of general application and the particular branches of study which he recommends ; to the son, because the tone of the letter, the manner in which the father explains his different recommendations, fortifying them by appeals to his son's reason and filial affection, shows that he conceived him to be already imbued with no little sobriety of mind and steadiness of principle ; and, if he follows up his advice on grave matters with admonitions almost equally earnest on the general appearance and manners which he desires his pupil to cultivate, none but the most pedantic critics will think such topics beneath the notice of a judicious parent. Nor will any one deny that these precepts also produced beneficial fruit, who considers the personal difficulties which beset his son when prime minister, and which were only overcome, as they only could have been overcome, by the unvarying exercise of the most perfect tact and courtesy.

Addiscombe Place, November 4th, 1784.

MY DEAR BOB,

I send you the enclosed letter, which I received from Sir Banks Jenkinson<sup>1</sup> a few days ago, as you will see by the latter part of it how much we are all of us interested in your welfare ; and I hope it will serve as an inducement to you to pursue your

<sup>1</sup> Sir Banks Jenkinson was the head of the family ; an old Gloucestershire baronet, whom Mr. Jenkinson himself succeeded five years afterwards in the baronetcy, which now belongs to the present Sir George Jenkinson.



studies with great industry, as you will thereby secure to yourself the affection and support of every part of your family. You are so far advanced in your Latin and Greek that I have no doubt that by the time you leave the Charterhouse you will be properly master of those two languages, but I wish you at present to pay great attention to your exercises, in which you are not very forward, and I have on this head but one piece of advice to give you, which is, that you should not be satisfied in doing your exercises just so as to pass without censure, but always aim at perfection; and be assured that in doing so you will by degrees approach to it. I hope also that you will avail yourself of every leisure moment to apply yourself to algebra and the mathematics you will thereby attain not only a knowledge of those sciences, but by an early acquaintance with them you will acquire a habit of reasoning closely and correctly on every subject, which will on all occasions be of infinite use to you. The hours which are not employed in the manner before mentioned you will give to the reading of history and books of criticism, and here the knowledge you have of the French language will furnish you with many excellent books. I would wish you for the present not to read any novels, as they will only waste your time, which you will find not more than sufficient for the pursuit of more useful and important studies. What I have just pointed out to you are the principal objects you should have in view; but believe me, in addition to all these it will be necessary that you should pay proper attention to your person. Every failing in this respect creates disgust, or exposes a man to ridicule in such a manner as to defeat the advantages he would otherwise derive from his parts and learning, or other accomplishments of greater importance. You will recollect the advice I have of late repeatedly given you on this subject, and I am sure you will attend to it, for you are just at the age when improper manners and tastes are acquired, which will become habitual if they are not now corrected. My letter is a long one: I am persuaded, however, that you will impute all I have written to the affection I bear you. Believe me, that the principal happiness I shall expect to enjoy in the decline of life is that which I shall derive from your prosperity and eminence. If I mistake not, there are others of our family

who, like me, look forward with anxiety to the figure you will hereafter make in the world, and feel themselves interested in the character you will bear. It is my earnest wish and firm persuasion that we shall not be disappointed. Lady Cope and your cousins desire their love to you. I am, with great truth,  
dear Bob,

Your affectionate Father,

C. JENKINSON.

From the Charterhouse in 1786 he went to Christchurch, where, as his letters to his father show, he was far from considering himself emancipated from the necessity of following the advice which had been given him two years before. On the contrary, he was a hard worker, and dwells with actual pleasure, and comments with shrewd discernment, on the different characteristics of the great classic writers; especially of those whose works elucidate the histories of the Greeks and Romans, and the ideas of government and policy entertained by them. Livy seems to have been his especial favourite, since he speaks of taking it up "*as a lounging book*," as a relaxation from the severer efforts required fully to appreciate the conflict between Demosthenes and his rival; though his warmest encomiums of all are reserved for Plato, whose beauty of expression he esteems so greatly, that to call the language of any of his treatises "the language of Plato" is so to exhaust eulogy "that nothing more can be said in praise of it;" while his philosophy he rates even more highly, affirming, with an enthusiasm which requires some deduction, that "his tenets are the same that were afterwards maintained by our Saviour, and such as were perfectly unknown both to the Jews and heathens." He was careful also to adhere to that admonition of his father which many would have found harder to follow than any which inculcate study and industry, and to keep a watch over and break himself of any bad habits into which he had fallen, or to which he was inclined. In one of his Oxford letters he writes: "Though I had contracted a habit of disputing in company during the two or three first terms

I was here, I have been long since convinced of the bad effects arising from that habit, and I have prevented these bad effects in the most particular manner by avoiding as much as possible all mixed companies, and living principally with a few particular people . . . . My tutor has frequently thought that I have been too much run away with by general ideas, and that I do not weigh and consider a book sufficiently. This I endeavour to correct." A youth who at eighteen was thus patient of admonition, thus candid and even severe in his judgment of himself, had already made some progress in fitting himself for an official career. And how steadily he was already training himself for political life is shown still more plainly by others of his letters, in which he proves himself a careful and shrewd observer of public affairs both at home and abroad. He was, as might have been expected, a warm partisan of the ministry; though, on topics on which his father disagreed with Pitt, naturally preferring him for his guide. In one of his letters he ventures even "to lament the madness and folly of which Mr. Pitt had been guilty," in supporting Wilberforce's measures for the abolition of the slave-trade, for his father was vehemently opposed to the introduction of any new law on the subject, from a belief that the trade was necessary for the welfare both of our West Indian colonies, and of our navigation trade at home; and he himself advocated the same view in one of the earliest speeches he addressed to the House of Commons. On this subject, however, the young politician grew wiser as he grew older; and, by the time that his opinion had risen to be one of influence and authority, the cause of freedom, so inseparably connected with the glory of the British constitution, had no more resolute advocate.

The letter which has been quoted speaks of his living principally with "a few particular people;" and two of those so chosen by him now continued to be united to him, both by the closest ties of personal regard and also of

political connexion, to the end of his life. One was Lord Granville Leveson, whom, on another occasion, he extols to his father as "equally conspicuous for the soundness of his understanding, the excellence of his heart, and, above all, for an industry not usual with people of his situation;" and to whom he himself, in after life, afforded an opportunity of justifying his early partiality by his discretion as our ambassador at Paris in more than one trying crisis. For his admiration of the other, so far as his abilities were concerned, he can find no language sufficiently powerful; the readiness of his scholarship, the acuteness of his argumentative powers, and his ceaseless flow of high spirits and love of fun, seem, by turns, to have struck him as his peculiar characteristic; if he could discover, or suspect, any fault in this friend, it was when he fancied him somewhat prone to sacrifice graver considerations to the wish to point a jest more keenly, or to show his wit at the expense of his associates. Once, in later years, when he himself was a Secretary of State, with his early friend for one of his colleagues, he looked upon himself as having been most unprovokedly singled out for the butt of his sarcastic depreciation, and, for a time, keenly resented the unfriendliness of the aspersions cast upon him. But both men were of too generous a nature to misconstrue one another for any lengthened period; for the other was George Canning. Judicious friends reconciled them; they continued colleagues, and, in subsequent years, Canning had no warmer admirer than Lord Liverpool of his oratory, which all admitted to be unequalled among his contemporaries; nor had Lord Liverpool any coadjutor who more constantly and gratefully proclaimed his sense of the support and assistance which the Prime Minister afforded to every member of his administration.

In the summer of 1789 Mr. Jenkinson left Oxford, spending the remainder of that, and a greater portion of the next three years, in travelling abroad. The chief object which influenced his father in adopting this plan for him was, as

we see from the correspondence of both, that he might extend his general political knowledge by informing himself on the spot of the characteristics and resources of the different countries which he was to visit, and by cultivating an acquaintance with their leading men. And he himself, fully coinciding in this view, showed his further inclination for work, by taking with him a small but well chosen library, and, even among the fascinations of Florence and Naples, finding time not only for an extensive study of the language of the country, but for a reperusal of Blackstone's Commentaries, and a renewed dalliance with the more graceful attractions of Virgil and Horace. His classical recollections did not, however, lead him to share the enthusiasm which his favourite poets expressed for the beauties of the country in which they sang. On the contrary, he tells his father that "with respect to the country nothing can be so disagreeable as the country about Rome. If I had never been in Holland, I should say it was the ugliest country I ever beheld; indeed it is difficult to believe that the Romans, who had the whole world to choose out of, should have continued long to reside in a country so unhealthy and so disgusting." The unattractiveness of the country about Rome, however, only made him the more keenly alive to the change of scenery which was presented to his eyes by the Neapolitan territory. That he describes as "the most beautiful country I ever beheld; the richest cultivation, the greatest variety of hill and vale, the most striking points of view; here I should say Saturn must have resided during the golden age," forgetting, apparently, that his favourite Virgil assured him that the chosen abode of the old deity was that very district<sup>1</sup> which he had just con-

<sup>1</sup> "Hæc nemora indigenæ Fauni Nymphæque tenebant,  
Gensque virum truncis et duro robore nata  
Quis neque mos neque cultus erat; nec jungere tauros,  
Aut componere opes nûrant, aut parcere parto  
Sed rami atque asper victu venatus alebat.  
Primus ab ætherio venit Saturnus Olympo,  
Arma Jovis fugiens, et regnis exul ademptis.

demned as unworthy of even the mortals who worshipped him. In other respects he took him for his guide. "I have travelled," he adds, "with Æneas through the grotto of the Sybil and the lake of Avernus; I have passed with him from Tartarus to Cocytus, and from Cocytus to Elysium. I have drunk Falernian wine in the villa of Hortensius, contemplating from the same spot the Temple of Venus, the houses of Cicero and Cæsar, and the reputed (though falsely so) tomb of Agrippina. I have visited the baths of Marius and the famous ruin of the Temple of Jupiter. Virgil has been my constant companion; I have found him not inferior in geography to poetry, and I shall in a few days pay my homage at the tomb of the divine poet, remembering with a grateful heart the luxurious moments his verses have so lately afforded me." But, if Saturn had civilized the inhabitants of Latium in the days of old, he found that either that civilization had not extended into the adjacent province, or that it was sadly worn out. Nothing can be more dreary than the picture which he draws of the universal indolence and filth of the lower orders. On these points, indeed, he only coincides with other travellers, but I do not know that any traveller has given so terrible an idea of the propensity of the Neapolitans to the most atrocious crimes as is conveyed in the following passage of a letter written after a month's sojourn in that outwardly beautiful city: "Nothing is more common than assassinations in Naples: the week does not pass without your hearing of four or five, and in cases of murder little redress is to be found. The judges are so poor that they are mostly liable to be bribed, so that, if the criminal has any money, he is almost sure of escaping. I was told by a gentleman of some consideration in this place that it was computed that the king lost in the town of Naples above

Is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis  
Composuit, legesque dedit, Latiumque vocari  
Maluit, his quoniam latuisset tutus in oris."

*Æn.* viii. 314.



4,000 subjects every year by assassination, and that murder was considered as a crime much inferior to theft." Of the higher classes his picture, if less formidable, is not much more attractive. "Among the higher rank of people there are very few that are worth knowing; they are not only ignorant, but in general they despise every kind of knowledge. The women are gallant, without being, for the most part, either amiable or pleasing."

In the autumn of 1789 he was in Paris just after the Night of Dupes,<sup>1</sup> as Maury called the fatal sitting of the 4th of August; when the politicians and financiers of the city were agitated by the consideration of Necker's new income-tax of 25 per cent. and the loan of 30 millions which he had demanded avowedly as a temporary expedient to give him time to mature a scheme to place the whole revenue of the State on a better footing. For this most narrow-minded though well-meaning statesman was so imbued with the idea of the superior importance of finance to all other matters, that he believed that all the discontent of the nation at large, and all the appetite for change which was manifestly the dominant passion of the Assembly, would be at once allayed if he could only point out a sure mode for the extinction of the pecuniary embarrassments of the kingdom. But Mr. Jenkinson's report to his father of the feeling of that body, and of the citizens in general on the subject, was not calculated to inspire him with much confidence in the minister's success. He wrote that though "the Assembly had accepted Necker's system of finance, they had only done so, *de confiance en M. Necker*, without the least deliberation on any subject, meaning by that phrase, if it should not succeed, to throw the whole blame upon him. I have conversed," he continues, "with a variety of people on this plan, and I find all who understand the subject condemn it. It appears almost impossible

<sup>1</sup> In his speech on Lord Lansdowne's motion on the state of the country, November 30th, 1819, he mentions that he "was present at the capture of the Bastille."



to conceive that the provinces will consent to part with so considerable a portion of their income, particularly as the payment is required in eighteen months. France is at present in such a situation that I can easily suppose that the nobility and men of property would readily consent to pay part of their fortune for the positive security of the rest. But for the sacrifice they are to make, according to the plan of M. Necker, a temporary relief only is to be procured, and, for what they know, they may be in as bad a situation a twelvemonth hence as they are at present. M. Necker says in his discourse to the Assemblée, *L'emprunt remplit lentement*. I heard it yesterday asserted with great confidence by a person who pretended to be informed, that if M. Necker could not procure a certain sum, which he almost despaired of, before the 8th of this month,<sup>1</sup> the bankruptcy would be declared on that day. This fact I will not answer for. There have been great confusions in Paris in the course of the last week. On Monday night the *milice bourgeoise*, attempting to interfere in the Palais Royal, were repelled. How this matter will end it seems more and more difficult every day to determine. The next fortnight is considered as important, but so has been every fortnight since I have been here."

The information contained in the above extract was closely verified by subsequent events. But what is most remarkable in them, considering that the writer was only a youth of nineteen, is the care which it displays in the collection of important facts, and the sober-minded caution in forming an opinion on them. And his judgment was equally acute and correct on home politics; for the next year, on the removal of Mr. Grenville to the House of Lords, he writes: "I was very much surprised at the promotion of Mr. Grenville; it was what never entered my head, nor that of any other person's, I believe, except Mr. Pitt's and his own, who, I am convinced, have long had

<sup>1</sup> The date of the letter is October 1st. The attack on Versailles was already fixed for October 5th.

the scheme of bringing the business of the House of Lords, as well as that of the Commons, entirely into their own hands." The conclusion to which his conjectures led him is the very same that is expressed by Pitt's biographer; and which, as we learn by the same authority, was also formed at the time by the experienced Duke of Richmond.<sup>1</sup> Still more important, as a proof of the innateness of those principles of unswerving integrity and honour which were the especial characteristics of his own administration, are the sentiments which, a month or two afterwards, he expressed on the subject of his father's continuance in office. Among the objections to Grenville's promotion which the Duke of Richmond had urged to the Prime Minister, one, and that not the weakest, was that "he did not imagine that Lord Hawkesbury would feel much disposed to act under him," and it would seem that such a feeling was actually entertained by Lord Hawkesbury himself, and that, with a view to allay it, Pitt proposed some other arrangement bearing the appearance of favour and promotion, which, however, was never carried out. Lord Hawkesbury related to his son the fact of the negotiation, its nature, and his own disinclination to agree to the proposals made to him; and the young man's reply is to the last degree positive and uncompromising. "You know I always thought you entitled to that favour, so much so that I do not think you should accept it on any *conditions* whatever. The quitting your present situation for the office that I conclude they offered to you would have been highly disgraceful, and I agree with you entirely in thinking it would be better to resign altogether than to acquiesce on such conditions. However agreeable the profits of office may be, they never are to be sought at the price of reputation and honour; and I would rather not inherit a fortune at all than inherit one which in the course of honour and integrity I never could have succeeded to."

It was not in those days unusual for persons to be

<sup>1</sup> Stanhope's Life of Pitt, ii 73, 77

returned by constituencies before they were of age to take their seats in Parliament, though Fox is probably the only instance of a minor venturing to take the oaths and raise his voice in debate. And, in accordance with this certainly unconstitutional practice, in the course of the year 1790 the authority of Sir James Lowther over the borough of Appleby (the same which had the honour of giving Pitt himself the first opportunity of displaying his precocious genius to the Parliament of his country) was exerted to procure the election of Mr. Jenkinson. He was not, however, as impatient to hear his own voice as the great Whig statesman had shown himself; on the contrary, he did not rise in the House till he had been for above a year a member of it, though it is no slight proof how great was the expectation which was already formed of him that, on the occasion of Mr. Whitbread moving a censure on the Government on the question known as that of the Russian armament,<sup>1</sup> Pitt selected him to open the debate on his side. Nor was the minister deceived in his judgment of him. In what, for a maiden speech, might have been called a most ambitious if it had not been a most successful display, the young orator justified the measures which had been taken by an extensive survey of the condition of all the principal nations of Europe. He was mistaken, indeed, when, adopting the views of Burke, who had predicted that the language of future historians would be *Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*, he pronounced "the strength and influence of France at an end, so that we had no further danger to apprehend from that once formidable rival." But he was only proclaiming, for the first time, the conviction which since that day has often prompted our

<sup>1</sup> Russia had lately gone to war with Turkey, and had taken the strong and important towns of Ismail and Oczakov; and Pitt, unable by negotiation to procure favourable terms for Turkey, suddenly augmented the navy, and brought down a message from the King to the House of Commons that this additional armament was caused by the possibility of open resistance to the encroachments of Russia becoming necessary.

foreign policy, when he added that "a Power had succeeded to France no less deserving of attention from its restless politics and ambitious views, namely, Russia; of which the conduct proved her deep-laid designs on the territories and independence of her potent neighbours. Her plans of conquest against the Turks are notorious. Were she to accomplish them, the balance of Europe would be totally destroyed, to the manifest injury of every state in this quarter of the globe." He justified Turkey for having begun the present contest by a reference to "the manner in which Russia had made herself mistress of the Crimea, to her intrigues in Egypt, and to the haughty and unjust claims which she had put forth to some of the fairest provinces of the Sultan's dominions;" and reminded his hearers that Britain had once already mediated successfully between those who were now at war. When he proceeded to point out that "the sovereign whose position would best enable him to stem the torrent of Russian aggression was the King of Prussia, and that therefore it was the highest wisdom in our Government to draw closer the bonds of alliance with that potentate," he was taking a line of argument which must have been especially acceptable to Pitt, as being an indirect approval of his own father's policy at the time of the Seven Years' War. And though, as he drew towards the conclusion of his speech, he ventured on one more assertion which was falsified by the subsequent triumphs of the French armies, "that the present era was not calculated for invasion or conquests;" he carried the whole House with him when he affirmed that "Great Britain was constitutionally the foe of all wars of ambition and wanton aggression, and that a stable peace was equally her interest and inclination."

Our Parliamentary annals have recorded no maiden speech which made so great an impression. Pitt himself began his own harangue by pronouncing it "not only a more able first speech than had ever been heard from a young member, but one so full of philosophy and science,

strong and perspicuous language, and sound and convincing arguments, that it would have done credit to the most practised debater and most experienced statesman that ever existed." And for the next two or three days his father was almost overwhelmed with letters of congratulation from the most eminent personages in the kingdom; from Dundas and Burke, who had themselves heard the speech; from the Primate, Lord Dover, Lord Bathurst, and other peers, who could only judge from the report of others, but who bore their unanimous testimony to the fact that they had never heard a maiden speech so universally extolled as one of the very highest promise.

In the summer of 1792 he resumed his travels, this time taking his course through the Netherlands towards the Rhine, and transmitting to his father a great deal of information, which was both curious and valuable, respecting the conduct and objects of the French emigrants, and the light in which they beheld the course of events in Paris. It is impossible to exaggerate the folly or the mischief of their behaviour. He reached Brussels in the middle of July, just at the moment when the unhappy and bewildered Louis was venturing on the only act of his career which, if known, would have justified his enemies in the imputations of bad faith with which they were unceasingly assailing him; putting himself in communication with the sovereigns whose armies were known to be preparing for an immediate invasion of his kingdom. It was of the most vital consequence to his interests that such a step, and also the existence in his breast of the feelings which had prompted it, should be kept most carefully secret. Yet at that very moment the Baron de Breteuil,<sup>1</sup> who was universally known to enjoy the king's perfect confidence, had the inexcusable imprudence to declare "that he had authority to say that the sentiments of the king and queen had never varied, and that the king only waited for the entrance of the [Prussian] army into France and

<sup>1</sup> He had only just ceased to be *Ministre de la Maison du Roi*.

a proper opportunity to declare himself in its favour." The Duke of Brunswick, the Prussian commander-in-chief, though he did not show himself skilful in the field, seems, from Mr. Jenkinson's account, to have displayed more address in his saloon. "He treated the emigrants on every occasion with marked civility and attention, but at the same time uniformly resisted whatever they proposed."

From Brussels Mr. Jenkinson proceeded to Coblenz, which was at that moment the head-quarters of the main body of the emigrants. The French princes themselves were there, and with them M. de Calonne, the minister whose rashness had very mainly contributed to bring affairs in Paris into their existing condition, but who nevertheless was still the chief adviser of the king's brothers, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois. It was also the point of rendezvous for the Austrian and Prussian armies, so that Mr. Jenkinson had an opportunity of gaining much information as to the condition of the German armies, with the character and views of the German leaders; and one or two of his letters to his father, who was his principal correspondent during his travels, are worth preserving, from the light which they throw on these points, and also because it is interesting to see the manner in which the different occurrences as they took place struck so acute and impartial an observer. It is singular to find him approving of the tone of the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, which is believed to have been issued by him against his own judgment, in compliance with the authoritative demands of the king and emperor, and which dealt out threats such as neither the law of nations nor the customs of war had ever been supposed to justify. But, on other points, while his information was accurate, his judgment was sound; and his estimate of the relative strength of the Austrian and Prussian monarchies, in spite of the superior discipline which the great Frederick had introduced into the Prussian army, and which, as will be seen, he appreciated at its full



value, was abundantly verified by the long stand which Austria made against the might and genius of Napoleon, while Prussia was struck down in a single campaign. Nor is the light unimportant which he throws on the progress of affairs in Paris itself. For nothing can show more clearly the extent to which the wrong-headed perverseness of the emigrants enhanced the difficulties of the unhappy king, and tended to destroy the last chance of his escaping from the evils which surrounded him.

Coblentz, July 22d, 1792.

DEAR FATHER,

I arrived at this place the day before yesterday, and found no difficulty in procuring a lodging. There are at present very few French here, as they were most of them obliged to leave the town on the arrival of the Prussians. The Comte d'Artois and M. de Calonne will return here to-day; the King of Prussia and the Duke of Brunswick are likewise expected from Mayence, where they had an interview with the emperor. The last regiment will arrive to-morrow. I have not yet seen the camp, which is situated at about a league from this town, but I propose riding there this evening. It is expected that there will be a grand review of the army on the 27th, and that on the 28th or 29th they will proceed to the frontier of France.<sup>1</sup> From my last letter you will easily judge that there is no direct communication between the King and Queen of France and the emigrant princes. Their confidence is completely placed in the Baron de Breteuil. The king was very much displeased that the projects which he had formed were abandoned by the emigrants. His wish was to separate the princes, that the Comte d'Artois should go to Madrid, Monsieur to Turin, and the Prince de Condé should remain in this country.<sup>2</sup> This system, as we know, is directly the reverse of what has been

<sup>1</sup> The invasion took place on the 30th. (Alison, x. § 15.)

<sup>2</sup> Louis's reason for this suggestion was to be found in the quarrels which divided his brothers, who had established rival courts, with a mistress at the head of each, who agitated the whole society of the emigrants with their wranglings; while Calonne was jealous of De Breteuil, and did his best to disparage him to the German princes,

pursued. There is a complaint that the money which had been procured from the different courts of Europe has been extremely misapplied. Russia, Prussia, and Spain contributed very considerable sums. The intention certainly was that the whole of the money should be made use of for the support of the emigrants. Instead of this, however, a great part of it has been employed, by the advice of M. de Calonne, in an attempt to excite commotions in some of the frontier towns of France. . . .

It is not easy to conceive the sovereign contempt with which the Prussians of every description, soldiers as well as officers, treat the French. If they are satisfied that you are not a Frenchman, they behave to you with the greatest civility; to convince them of this, however, requires considerable pains. The French army consists of about 16,000 men. In this number there are about 500 soldiers; all the rest are officers. There are several persons who have been taken up as emissaries from the National Assembly; one of them, whose name I forget, offered his services to the Princes for the purpose of raising a body of men. The offer was accepted, but it was afterwards discovered that he had been employed by the clubs of Paris to raise these very men to fight against the emigrants. About fifty Frenchmen were sent away from Mayence a few days ago on suspicion of being democrats.

I remain, dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. J.

Coblentz, July 25th, 1792.

DEAR FATHER,

I send you enclosed a copy of the manifesto<sup>1</sup> which the Duke of Brunswick has thought fit to publish previous to the commence-

though he knew him to be Louis's authorised agent. (See "Louis XVI." "Marie Antoinette." &c., the collection of letters lately published by M. Feuillet de Conches, Nos. 299, 594.)

Louis's real wish, with which, indeed, his interest coincided, was that his brothers should return to France, and he had lately written to entreat them to do so, but they refused, replying that he was writing under coercion, and not expressing his real sentiments. *Ib.* 593, 598, 603, &c.)

<sup>1</sup> It was dated on the 25th, the day on which this letter was written



ment of the campaign, and which he publicly circulated in the course of a day or two. Though I own it has been my opinion that it would have been better to take no step of this kind, as any manifesto must be in some degree a compromise, and as any compromise under the present circumstances, when the force is on their side, appears to me to be premature; yet, if it was determined to adopt a measure of this sort, a more unobjectionable paper could not have been imagined. It is moderate, and yet at the same time calculated to inspire terror.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it is said that many of the emigrants consider it too moderate.

The King of Prussia arrived on Sunday night, and this morning reviewed the right wing of his camp. I was present at the review, and I was surprised, as indeed every foreigner must be, at the operations of the army. I had heard much of the discipline of the Prussian troops, and of their coolness and composure even a few days before they know they are to be in action. This therefore I could conceive: but the celerity and precision with which all their movements are performed are inconceivable to those who have not seen them. Every operation they go through is mechanical. All other armies, for instance, when music is played to them, are ordered to march in time to that music. On the contrary, the Prussian soldiers are obliged to march seventy-five steps in a minute, whatever may be the time of the music. By this means their march becomes a matter of exact calculation. . . . .

Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. JENKINSON.

<sup>1</sup> Among other things it declared that the inhabitants of towns, boroughs, and villages who should dare to defend themselves against his troops, should be punished on the spot, and their houses burnt and demolished; and that, if the least violence or outrage should be committed on the King, Queen, or Royal family, and if provision were not immediately made for their safety, preservation, and liberty, the Duke would inflict a signal, rare, and memorable vengeance by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total destruction. It is strange that any degree of sympathy for the unhappy sovereigns, who were now little better than prisoners in Paris, could have led an English gentleman to regard these threats as moderate.

Coblentz, July 26th, 1792.

DEAR FATHER,

I have at length had an opportunity of fully gratifying my curiosity with the sight of the Prussian army. I should be at a loss to decide whether this great body was most deserving of attention from the choice of the individuals who compose it, from the discipline and subordination that reign in every part of it, or from the celerity and precision with which every military operation is performed. It is a subject of astonishment even to those most versed in military affairs that, after a march of nearly seven weeks, the different regiments that have arrived here, instead of being exhausted and fatigued, appear in the fullest vigour and spirits, and in every respect prepared for the labours of the campaign. I have had an opportunity of conversing with several military men on the comparative state of this army with that of the Austrians, and I find it universally agreed that (except for the light troops) the Prussian army is indubitably the superior. One reflection, however, necessarily occurs on this subject. The population of the King of Prussia's dominions is so small (scarcely exceeding five millions) that if, from any relaxation of discipline or any unforeseen accident, his army should decline, it would require such exertions to re-establish it as under a prince of moderate capacity could scarcely be expected; and Prussia, from being the first military Power in Europe, would in that case be reduced at best to the state of a secondary Power. The population of the dominions of the House of Austria is, on the contrary, so extensive, and the people in much the greater part of these dominions are so calculated by nature to form excellent soldiers, that, though the Austrian army may be inferior at one period to what it has proved itself at others, there is little danger of any considerable alteration for the worse in that army, and, if any such alteration should take place, so great are the resources of the country that it might easily be re-established. The artillery of the Prussian army is moderate. It is, I believe, however, better than the Austrian. The French artillery was, before the Revolution in that country, without comparison the best in Europe. Since that period the greater part of the engineers

have quitted France, and most of them are now in this neighbourhood. At present, therefore, the preference is given to the Prussian artillery.

I dined yesterday with the Duke of Brunswick. I found him particularly civil, and not uncommunicative; but, from the conversation I had with him, I could easily judge how impossible it would be to push him on any subject on which he was desirous of remaining silent. You will have seen by the copy of the manifesto which I have sent you that he disclaims, in the names of the Emperor and King of Prussia, all idea of dismembering France. His conversation with me was to the same purport, and he added that it was the determination of those sovereigns to receive nothing in compensation for the expense they would be obliged to incur. This conduct must be admitted by all parties to reflect the greatest honour on these two courts. In the course of the conversation I ridiculed the idea of the Jacobins debauching the French army with assignats of fifty sous. In reply to this he gave a most entertaining account of a Prussian army. As to assignats, he said, he commanded men who were too stupid to comprehend how it was possible that paper should have a value annexed to it; and as to women, he would defy all the beauty in the world to make any impression on Prussian soldiers. He concluded with observing, *Ils sont grandes bêtes, mais pourtant ils savent bien leur affaire*. I endeavoured to sound him on the affairs of Poland, but I could get no opinion from him on that subject. His silence, however, may be considered as a confirmation of what has been generally believed in this place, that that unfortunate country is devoted to destruction.<sup>1</sup> The King of Prussia is here with his two sons. The Prince Royal is well-informed, modest, and uncommonly well-disposed. His appearance, how-

<sup>1</sup> Stanislaus Augustus, the King of Poland, had just granted a new Constitution to his subjects, preserving the elective disposition of the crown, but combining with that principle a regulation which confined the election to the Royal family. The arrangement, according to Lacretelle, excited anew the jealousy of Catherine of Russia, and by a treaty concluded between her, the Emperor, and the King of Prussia at Pilnitz, a fresh partition of Poland was arranged, which was finally accomplished when in the autumn of 1794 Suvarof captured Warsaw, and made prisoners of Kosciusko and of Stanislaus himself.

ever, is rather against him. Prince Louis, the second son, has the advantage of an agreeable person in addition to all the good qualities of his brother. . . . I can perceive that the Prussians are excessively dissatisfied with the conduct of Great Britain respecting Russia. I have done all in my power to convince them that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was impossible for our Government to have acted in any other manner, but to persons who live under an arbitrary government, who are unacquainted with the variety of interests that must be consulted in a government constituted like ours, all the reasoning that can be used is unintelligible.

The agreement between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, that no volunteers should be accepted, has been most rigidly adhered to.<sup>1</sup> Prince Henry was very desirous of serving the campaign, but was refused. He is so incensed at the conduct of the King of Prussia, that he is determined to have no further concern with military affairs. The hereditary Prince of Orange has likewise been refused, and several of the generals of the army have not been permitted to take their sons as aides-de-camp. My dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. JENKINSON.

Coblentz, August 8th, 1792.

DEAR FATHER,

I quitted this place the day after writing my last letter, and set out for Mayence. From Mayence I went to Manheim. I found the Austrians had passed the Rhine. I determined, however, to follow them, and, understanding that they had marched towards Spires, I immediately set out for that place. I found them encamped not far from Spires, and discovered, from one of their officers, that they were to quit their camp at 12 o'clock that night, and march to the frontier. I left Spires between 10 and 11 o'clock, and went to a village at the distance of about a league from it; and I had there the satisfaction of

<sup>1</sup> In a former letter he had told his father, "The French, whose *empressement* you are well acquainted with, made several propositions to him the Duke of Brunswick, and among others, that they might be allowed to serve in the *Avant-Garde* of the army. To this request a very polite refusal was all they met with."

seeing five-and-twenty thousand Austrians within twelve miles of the frontier, marching under the command of Prince Hohenlohe. I never saw a more striking scene. They appeared elated with joy at the thoughts of attacking the French the next morning. . . . . The Austrian army is apparently very inferior to the Prussian. One of the striking features of the Prussian army is, that amongst several thousand men you will scarcely see one who is inferior to the rest, with such extraordinary care are they chosen. I cannot say as much of the Austrian army; some of the troops are beautiful, but there is a great difference distinguishable in every part of the army. The Austrians hate the French at least as much as the Prussians. I happened to say to one of their officers, "You expect some of the French to join you in a few days?" His answer was, "Nous n'en avons pas besoin, nous ferons bien notre affaire sans eux." It is singular that the Powers of Germany should be so particularly active in support of the aristocrats, when, so far as I can judge, this is the country which had the least to dread from the propagation of the new doctrines. I have found in every place where I have been the most marked contempt for French of all descriptions, both aristocrats and democrats.

There exists the greatest animosity between the Austrian and Prussian army. It is scarcely possible to conceive how they hate each other. I have taken particular pains to ascertain this fact, and you may depend upon the truth of it. I understand that the King of Prussia's expedition is very unpopular in his own country; the wish of his subjects was to assist the Poles against the Emperor of Russia. It has been reported here, but I will not answer for the truth of it, that the Poles are so offended with the conduct of the King of Prussia, who, they say, has deceived them, that they are determined to throw themselves, without any further resistance, into the arms of Russia.

Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. J.

Mr. Jenkinson had, as we have seen, accepted with implicit and indeed unavoidable belief the Duke of

Brunswick's assurances of the disinterested spirit which prompted the German sovereigns to exert themselves for the relief of their distressed brother the King of France. But he had scarcely left Coblentz on his way back to England when he found that he had been deceived, and he was forced to give his father a very different account of their intentions:

Bruxelles, August 23d, 1792

DEAR FATHER,

You will remember that, in a letter which I wrote to you from Coblentz, I informed you that, from the tenor of the Duke of Brunswick's conversation to me, I was led to suppose that the Court of Berlin, in their interference in the affairs of France, had not only renounced every idea of conquest and aggrandizement, but that it was their determination not to accept of even a pecuniary compensation. This was the tenor of the Duke of Brunswick's conversation to me and to several of the persons at Coblentz. Since my arrival at this place, however, I have come to the truth of the transaction. A correspondence has passed on this subject between the Comte de Schulemberg and the Baron de Breteuil. The Comte de Schulemberg, in a letter to the Baron de Breteuil, informed him that his master the King of Prussia would expect to be reimbursed. The Baron de Breteuil, in his answer, requested a particular explanation of the term "reimbursed." To this it was replied that all the King of Prussia desired was that the extraordinary expenses of the campaign might be defrayed: but that his master expected some declaration from the King of France on that subject. The Baron de Breteuil then declared that, *possessing full powers from the King, he could promise a complete reimbursement of all the expenses of the campaign, and that, if this were not sufficient, he would engage to procure a declaration to this purport in the King's handwriting.* This answer of the baron's was considered as satisfactory.

It will most probably appear extraordinary to you that the Austrians should never have commenced their operations till the entrance of the Prussians into France was fully ascertained. The mystery of the whole business is now, however,



unravelling. The Austrians were determined from the beginning to engage the Prussians as principals in the war. The intrigues that were employed to accomplish this object would be too numerous to state at present. One of their projects is, if possible, to drain Prussia of her treasure. A campaign of this kind is certainly not to be considered as a campaign in Silesia, where the greatest part of the money expended would return again into the coffers of the Government. If Prussia is fully reimbursed, according to the promise that has been made, the projects of Austria will be defeated; but it is impossible to place any certain reliance on a promise made under the present circumstances, which perhaps it may not even be in the power of the parties to fulfil. The account that I gave you in a former letter of the animosity subsisting between the Austrians and Prussians I have found confirmed in every place I have passed through. An account was received last night of the capture of Longwy by the Prussians. It is said that, on the entrance of the emigrant army into France, Monsieur is to be declared Regent of the country.<sup>1</sup> A report has been circulated to-day of a quarrel having arisen between Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois. . . . .

Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. JENKINSON.

You will, of course, be cautious of disclosing the contents of my letters from this place.

Four days later he writes in high praise of the judicious and conciliatory conduct of the Duke, giving also a plan of the operations of the invaders, which, as in the beginning it was very accurately carried out, shows how correct was his information:

Bruxelles, August 27th.

MY DEAR FATHER,

. . . The plan of the operations of the different armies is supposed to be arranged in the following manner. M de

<sup>1</sup> He actually did assume this title of Regent, and in that character issued commands to the emigrants, accompanied with threats if they should disobey them, which amounted to a complete ignoring of his brother's rights as actual king.

Clairfait, after having taken Longwy, was to proceed to attack Monmedi; the Prince Hohenlohe was to attack Thionville, and the Duke of Brunswick was to march on the 27th towards Verdun, and, after having taken that place, was to proceed with all possible expedition to Paris. The conduct of the king and the Duke of Brunswick since their entrance into France has been particularly well judged. They have released all the National Guards, on pretence that, not being taken under arms, they did not come within the meaning of the manifesto. They have done all in their power to conciliate them, and, to all appearance, with complete effect. The king, however, has at the same time declared that, if he should find any of them either dressed in the national uniform or with the national cockade,<sup>1</sup> he shall immediately make an example of them. The Prussian army on its first entrance into the country was disposed to plunder, and to behave with the greatest severity towards the inhabitants. Several villages had suffered considerably from the enormities which had been exercised. The King of Prussia went himself into the villages, gave the people money as a compensation for their sufferings, and ordered two of his soldiers who were principally concerned in these atrocities to be executed. If he continues to pursue this line of conduct, behaving with gentleness to those who are willing to submit, and with severity to those who are disposed to resist, the success of his operations will be extremely facilitated. You probably know that the Baron de Breteuil received an invitation from the Duke of Brunswick some time ago to come to him. I was in company with the baron last night, and it was his intention to set out this day. . . .

Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son,

R. B. JENKINSON.

It is evident that the habit which the writer had thus acquired in his foreign travels, of procuring correct information by his own personal inquiries, and of balancing

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this was the ground on which he detained Lafayette as a prisoner.



different reports, sifting them, and carefully reflecting and commenting on those which he adopted as correct, was good training for a politician, and especially for one who would form a correct notion of the views and modes of acting of foreign statesmen. And it was, therefore, calculated to be of special use to Mr. Jenkinson in the first important office which he was called upon to fill.

The course which he took in the next session of Parliament showed that the general result of his travels had been to imbue him with a strong tincture of the feelings with which, as he had reported, the Austrians and Prussians regarded the French. Parliament met on the 13th of December, 1792; and when Fox moved an amendment to the address, recommending the employment of "every species of honourable negotiation" in order to save the nation from embarking in a war with France, Mr. Jenkinson took a prominent part in opposing it, advocating immediate war in the plainest terms, on the ground that a comparison of our financial position with that of France proved us to be in a position to attack her at greater advantage than at any recent period: and deprecating with indignation the proposal to send an ambassador to the French Republic at the very moment when "the band of sanguinary ruffians" who were in the exercise of the chief authority in that country were bringing their king to trial, and sentencing him to death, and perhaps already murdering him.<sup>1</sup> He reiterated these opinions in the great debate which took place in February, when, after the death of the unhappy Louis, Fox renewed his efforts to avert war, on the grounds that "the complaints which had been stated against the French Government were not of a nature to justify war in the first instance, without our first attempting to obtain redress by negotiation;

<sup>1</sup> This speech was delivered December 15th. Louis had been brought before the Convention on the 11th; but after a day or two of discussion the hearing of his counsel was postponed to the 26th. He was put to death January 21st, 1793.

that in the negotiations which had taken place the ministers had not taken the proper measures to obtain redress without a rupture, and that it was not for the honour nor for the interest of Great Britain to make war upon France on account of the internal circumstances of that country." And in May, on a motion made by Mr. Grey in favour of Parliamentary Reform, he made the most elaborate speech which he had as yet delivered, defending the existing composition of the House of Commons on general principles, as maintaining that variety among the representatives of the people that was indispensable to secure a proper advocacy of all the varied interests of the nation. He affirmed that it worked well, fully answering the end for which it had been originally designed; and while he admitted that the House of Commons, which he described as "the democratic part of the constitution," ought to be in a certain degree affected by public opinion, yet he reminded his hearers that "its first quality was that of a deliberative assembly, and that, if public opinion was necessarily to affect its decisions on every occasion, it would cease to be a deliberative assembly, and the members would soon be degraded into the position of mere delegates." Mr. Grey had asserted that the national debt had originated from the corruption of the House. Mr. Jenkinson replied (and even in the vehemence of the debates which took place on the subject after his death, the correctness of his assertion was admitted by many of the chief Reformers) that this was so far from being the case that the wars which had caused the origin and increase of the debt, the Spanish War, the Seven Years' War, the American War, had all been agreeable to public opinion; that the Spanish War in particular had been "entered upon in compliance with the express requisition of the people, and contrary to the avowed opinion of the Government of the day." He insisted that the present administration had not the confidence of the House of Commons more

completely than it had also the confidence of the people at large; and that, in short, constituted as the House already was, public opinion had its due weight in the deliberations of Parliament on every important question.

Of these two questions, the war with France and the advisableness or danger of Parliamentary Reform, the first continued for more than twenty years to be the chief care and labour of every cabinet; the second, though not entirely allowed to slumber during the war, only began to assume formidable proportions during the last years of his own administration. On the first he so far modified his opinions as, when the establishment of a settled government in France had in a great degree removed the danger to be apprehended from the spread of revolutionary principles, to make himself a party to the conclusion of peace, to which indeed, as we shall presently see, he had been willing to consent some years earlier. On the second he never materially altered his sentiments, but adhered to the last to the opinion which he had now expressed, though, as will be seen hereafter, he was not unwilling in cases of corruption to substitute some other borough for that whose guilt in that respect had been proved. On both points his feelings were in entire conformity with those of the Government; and he had already so completely gained the ear of the House, and established his reputation as a speaker and debater of the first class, that Pitt became anxious to enlist him in the administration, and offered him a seat at the India Board, which he accepted, and thus began that official career which, except during the few months of Whig Government which ensued on the death of the Great Minister, he never relinquished.

<sup>1</sup> See the debates on the disfranchisement of Grampound in 1824, *infra*, chap. 28.

## CHAPTER II.

He recommends a march upon Paris—His father is made Earl of Liverpool—He (now Lord Hawkesbury) is serving with his regiment of militia in Scotland—His view of the progress of the war in Germany and of our own position—Approves of the negotiations for peace—Pitt's failing health in 1798—Seditious associations in England—Irish Rebellion and Union—Lord Hawkesbury's dissatisfaction with our campaign in Holland—The Catholic question—Scruples of George III.—Pitt's resignation—Character of Mr. Addington—Lord Hawkesbury becomes Foreign Secretary—Derangement of the King—Negotiations for peace—Lord Cornwallis is sent to Amiens—His interview with the First Consul—Conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens—Lord Hawkesbury's speech on it.

DURING the next few years Mr. Jenkinson took no very prominent part in Parliament. He had become Colonel of the Kentish Militia, and, as the employment of a large portion of our regular army on the Continent threw a good deal of garrison duty on that force, he was but little in London. He came up for some of the debates in which the Opposition from time to time renewed their remonstrances against the further prosecution of the war, and in these he took a prominent part, adhering to the views which he had before expressed ; in one instance provoking the ridicule of Sheridan and his followers by the expression of an opinion that the soundest military policy would be to strike at the heart of the enemy, and march upon Paris itself. Even now it may be questioned whether such an enterprise would have been beyond the means of the allies ; the ablest soldiers look upon it as certain that two years earlier it would not have been so, and that the Duke

of Brunswick would have found no force able to resist him if he had pressed on without hesitation after his first successes on the frontier, and the capture of Longwy and Verdun. But whether practicable or not in 1794, when Mr. Jenkinson advanced the suggestion, it was too bold a step for the contemplation of the somewhat pedantic commanders of the allied army ; and, as the balance of success soon began to incline to the side of the French, it never was possible after 1795 till it was adopted in the last campaign of the war.

It is a mistake in young speakers to put themselves forward too frequently ; and it may have been partly the very rarity of his speeches which was gradually but steadily raising his reputation in the House, and teaching him to feel himself of some importance to his colleagues. Lord Hawkesbury had been very averse to Pitt's measure of admitting American ships into the ports of our West Indian Islands, and Mr. Jenkinson urged him strongly to let his opinion be generally known, since he was deeply "pledged to the public on that subject ; if his father should in consequence resolve on quitting the Government, he had," he said, "made up his mind to resign also," but, he added, "he did not think that Pitt would dare to part with them." And, even should he do so, he himself should think any loss of office "a slighter evil than a sacrifice of opinion on such a subject." There proved, however, to be no necessity for so strong a step as a resignation of their offices. Pitt, who was unrivalled in his management of refractory or discontented colleagues whenever he thought them worth propitiating, succeeded in entirely appeasing any dissatisfaction the father may have felt, and in 1796 the agreement of both father and son with his policy on all important subjects was shown by the promotion of the first to the Earldom of Liverpool, and of the second, now become Lord Hawkesbury, to the more lucrative office of Master of the Mint, which, many years before, his father had filled under Lord North.

In the autumn of 1796 the Kentish Militia were quartered at Dumfries, and one of Lord Hawkesbury's letters from that town presents a not very attractive picture of the Scotch fashions of that day, though nothing could exceed the intended friendliness of their reception of the regiment. Their invitations to dinner were as numerous as the days of the week, but, he adds, "the style of living here is rather gross, though very hospitable. The servants are few, and very dirty; but there is a great quantity of meat put upon the table, and after dinner the bottle passes rather quicker than I like." From the same letter (its date is August 28) we learn that Pitt was already thinking of peace; in Lord Liverpool's opinion he was beginning to be dispirited at the results of the war. The news of the defeat of the Austrians at Lonato had just reached England; Moreau had crossed the Rhine, and was pressing forward towards Vienna, and it was not yet known how successful a stand the Archduke Charles was making on the Main. Still Lord Hawkesbury himself "saw no cause, even under those circumstances, for dejection. We are still," he continues, "fortunate enough to possess the empire of the sea, and the commerce of the world; and, if that can be preserved, I do not even now despair of the issue of the contest." Any appearance of discouragement, "he was convinced, would procrastinate peace rather than hasten it." From this manly spirit he never swerved, but in later years, even when the French successes seemed most unalloyed and their progress most irresistible, when Alexander had become the humble servant of Napoleon, and his brother emperor, Francis of Austria, had even given a daughter to his arms, he was as resolute an advocate for continuing the struggle, and as hopeful of ultimate victory, as when, while the Revolution was still in its agony, he had recommended a march upon Paris. Nevertheless he was now, with Pitt, willing to make peace, if it could be procured on terms as honourable and advantageous as Great Britain had a right to expect. But, if the



country were, as some indications seemed to show, "determined for peace on any terms," he was clear that "Mr. Pitt should risk his Government on the question, and not allow himself to be the instrument of carrying on measures which he disapproved." He drew, with sound discrimination, the line at which a minister may without self-abasement consent to guide his conduct by the judgment or momentary bias of the nation. On questions of inferior magnitude it may "be very well for a minister to give up his private opinion to the opinion of the public, but on questions of this nature a man should stand or fall by his own judgment. If this is not the case, how," he asks, "can we ever expect the Government to be carried on upon any one system of action? We shall be liable at every moment to be tossed about in consequence of the caprices of a few foolish, weak-minded people."

With these feelings he approved of the attempts made by Pitt both in 1796 and 1798 to terminate the war. And when Lord Malmesbury's diplomatic address was foiled by the insincerity and arrogance of the different French Governments, he cordially supported and spoke with great effect in defence of the minister's financial measures, especially of the suspension of cash payments, and the bill for the sale of the land-tax, which some of its opponents, with a singularly perverse ingenuity, did not forbear to characterise, firstly as an "atrocious fraud," and secondly as a measure wholly unconstitutional, since its object was to perpetuate a standing army. "As if a standing army had not been kept on foot for above a century, or as if any danger to the liberties of the nation had ever arisen from it."

In every debate in which the Opposition ventured to go to a division they were beaten by large majorities; but already the long continuance and violence of the parliamentary conflict was beginning to tell upon Pitt's constitution. Lord Hawkesbury's letters of the autumn of 1798 are full of expressions of alarm at his manifestly failing strength; and, though he expresses a hope that perhaps a

fit of the gout might relieve him, he, evidently speaking from the information of Pitt's medical adviser, intimates a fear that the disease may be more deeply seated. The attention of Parliament during this and the following year was occupied more by our domestic affairs than by the progress of the war. As far as we were concerned, it had ceased to have that kind of interest that arises from suspense and anxiety. We had withdrawn our army from the Continent, and by sea Lord Howe, Lord St. Vincent, Lord Duncan, and Lord Nelson, had so completely established our supremacy that it was acknowledged even by the French themselves, who took care to risk no general action after the destruction of their finest fleet at the mouth of the Nile. But at home our affairs were in a position that could not be regarded without the most painful uneasiness. In England seditious societies and seditious publications were more rife and more audacious than ever, and were producing a dangerous spirit of disaffection among the lower classes. A year or two before, the carriage of the king himself was pelted in the streets, and fired at as he went to open Parliament; and this year a regularly organized rebellion broke out in Ireland, which the French endeavoured to support by an invasion of that country. The rebels were routed, the whole force of the invaders was captured, and the peril in which the whole kingdom had been placed pointed out to Pitt the indispensable necessity of uniting Ireland with Great Britain by a measure similar to that which at the beginning of the century had been passed with regard to Scotland. It is unnecessary in this place to describe how warmly it was opposed, or by what energetic and varied ability it was at last carried. It was an achievement of itself sufficient to immortalize the name of the minister who accomplished it; yet it led, as will presently be seen, to his retirement from office, and opened a wider field than might otherwise have presented itself for some time to the abilities of the subject of this narrative.



Lord Hawkesbury at that moment was not altogether satisfied with his leader. The same year, 1799, had beheld the dispatch of a fresh British army to Holland, under the Duke of York, to co-operate with a Russian force; the object of the combined army being to quell the revolutionary party in that country, and to re-establish the Stadtholder in his ancient authority. The naval part of the expedition, for the British army was accompanied by an adequate fleet, succeeded completely; the Dutch sailors, who were for the most part partisans of the old Government, mutinied in our favour, and their Admiral, Story, had no alternative but to surrender his whole fleet, which Lord Duncan carried off to England. But the army was less fortunate. The British soldiers, indeed, displayed their usual indomitable valour, and on one occasion repulsed the French General Vandamme with heavy loss; but the Russians, when they arrived, were less successful. In the first general battle which took place after their junction with our forces, their division was repulsed with heavy loss, and its defeat compelled our regiments also to retreat. Another action was attended with nearly the same result; and at last the Duke of York, finding that his utmost efforts could only enable him to hold his ground against his present enemies, and that heavy reinforcements were on the point of joining them from France, while he himself had no further succour to expect, concluded a convention with the French general, by which he agreed to evacuate the country. Lord Hawkesbury, as will be seen from the following extracts from his letters, was disposed to be extremely indignant, and to blame not the general who had failed, but the minister who had planned or sanctioned the expedition; and that not because it had failed, but because, according to the information which he could collect, it was impossible that it should have succeeded. Thus he writes :

October 17th, 1799.

DEAR FATHER,

. . . . I have for some time looked to the expedition as not likely to be ultimately successful, though I did not think its termination would take place so soon. The day before I left London, I met Colonel Twiss. . . . He told me he looked upon the expedition as impracticable, if the French were able to collect a tolerable army in the country : that, in the last century, the Spaniards, with the best troops in Europe, had contended for nearly forty years for this very country, and were uniformly baffled in their attempts to get possession of it ; that they were successful in the countries which now compose Belgium and French Flanders, but that they were unable to make any impression on Holland. He regretted that the best appointed British army<sup>1</sup> that ever was collected should be employed on a service so little likely to be profitable to the country. I have heard that the Dutch who are here are of the same opinion with respect to the part of the country where the attack was made ; and that even Abercromby did not very much like the expedition. I agree with you that our Government is completely disgraced ; for what can be more disgraceful to a minister than to fail in an expedition, when your troops have been uniformly victorious, in consequence of the impracticability of the country which you have chosen for your scene of action. The consequence of it all has been, that we have ruined the Orange cause, perhaps for ever ; that we have given confidence to the French, and that we have already sacrificed about 15,000<sup>2</sup> British and Prussian troops. If, however, success would have led us to embark on a continental war, as *principals*, to the extent you mention, I am inclined to think it is very fortunate we never reached Amsterdam.

The next week he writes in something of the same spirit, or indeed blaming the arrangements of the ministers rather more, in proportion as the latest information received led him to be less severe on the general. “ If the account

<sup>1</sup> It did not, however, exceed 18,000 or 19,000 men.

<sup>2</sup> This proved to be a great exaggeration.

in the papers of last night is true, the Duke of York's convention is rather less disgraceful than was at first imagined. I agree with you, however, that the whole business is in the greatest degree discreditable. I am curious to know on whom the public principally throw the blame. The Duke of York is certainly not a fortunate nor a popular commander. Will he ever be trusted again with the command of a large army?"

This last question events prevented the necessity of ever answering. Before England again sent forth an army of any magnitude to the Continent an employment had been found for the Duke, for which it was soon seen that nature had most admirably qualified him. And though his repeated failures in Holland render it probable that he would never have become a skilful general in the field, as Commander-in-Chief of the whole army at the Horse Guards he displayed a great capacity for organization, united with an industry and energy which earned for him an honorable fame and unsurpassed popularity in that office. But at the moment we learn from another letter that the Cabinet itself was divided in opinion on the subject:

November 12th.

DEAR FATHER,

. . . . I am not surprised that there should exist some difference of opinion among your brethren on the late events; yet their mutual interest will probably keep them together. The friends of the Duke of York will, I have no doubt, make a common cause of the whole business; and Pitt (whatever his private feelings may be) will certainly support them. I have seen several officers who have come from Holland within these few days, and I can perceive that there is a difference of opinion in the army respecting the Duke's conduct. Some blame him, others very strongly defend him. Most of the Guards are warm in his praise. The officers I have seen speak highly of Abercromby<sup>1</sup> and Dundas,<sup>2</sup> and likewise of Moore;<sup>3</sup> but, though

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Abercromby, who fell at Alexandria.

<sup>2</sup> Sir David Dundas, who in 1809 became Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Sir John Moore, who fell at Corunna.

the other general officers showed great courage, they give them very little credit for knowledge of their profession. They all agree in abusing the Dutch, who, they say, behaved as ill as possible, and showed the most decided partiality to the French. It is singular that for the first time, I believe, since the German war, a sort of intercourse was kept up between our officers and the French officers at the advanced posts of the two armies. Some of the French officers sent a present to ours of two sheep, with orange ribbons in their ears.

The point which remains unexplained is the Duke of York's convention.<sup>1</sup> It is agreed on all hands that the retreat of our army might have been secured by inundating the country. When Nelson was sent to Teneriffe, and the object was found unattainable, in consequence of the unexpected force of the Spaniards, he sent word to the governor that he would burn the town, and cut his way through their army to his ships, if he was not suffered to re-embark unmolested. This had the desired effect. If he had been at the Helder, I have no doubt that, instead of purchasing a disgraceful capitulation, he would have made the French and Dutch restore him a proportion of English and Russian prisoners as the price of his not destroying the country. But all commanders are not Nelsons: would they were!

It has been mentioned that Pitt's success in carrying the Irish union, all-important as the measure was to the best interests of both England and Ireland, proved the cause of his retirement from office, which was never more honorably relinquished. He had not conceived it possible that that measure should singly prove a panacea for the manifold evils which impeded the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland. In his eyes it was but a preliminary to

<sup>1</sup> On the 6th of October the Duke gained a decided advantage over the French under Brune in the neighbourhood of Haarlem. But feeling the necessity of reinforcements and supplies, and the small probability that existed of obtaining them from any quarter before the end of the next week, he concluded a convention by which he agreed to evacuate Holland before the end of November, and to restore his prisoners. As he had still 20,000 men under his command, such a step certainly appears wholly inexcusable.

other enactments, among which those stood foremost which should deprive the Roman Catholics, then, as now, by far the more numerous portion of the population, of what was at least a plausible ground of complaint, by removing the political disabilities under which they laboured, and by also extinguishing, or at least abating, their discontent at the Protestant Church Establishment through a State endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy. It is quite certain that at that time, and for many years afterwards, both measures would have been received with unanimous gratitude by the professors of the Roman Catholic religion throughout the whole island. Unhappily, the first was postponed till it lost all its gracefulness through the circumstances under which it was carried, circumstances which gave it the appearance of being extorted from the fears of England rather than cheerfully conceded by a sense of justice; while the resolution which, on the only occasion on which the second was ever deliberately submitted to the judgment of the House of Commons, that body by a large majority recorded in its favour, even its advocates never attempted to ratify by any formal enactment.<sup>1</sup> But for this postponement Pitt was in no degree to be blamed. The justice and reasonableness of both measures was in his eyes undeniable. It was notorious that the disabilities of the Roman Catholics had been imposed on them not from religious, but from political reasons; because those who held their doctrines were also desirous of replacing their co-religionists, the princes of the House of Stuart, on the throne; and now that that race was practically extinct,<sup>2</sup> and the House of Brunswick had no rival claimants of its authority, it seemed reasonable that the disabilities should not survive the circumstances which had caused their imposition.

The equity, as well as the policy, of endowing the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland seemed to the

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, chap. xxix.

<sup>2</sup> The Cardinal York was the only descendant of James II. still living.

minister to be equally maintainable by the soundest argument. The Reformation in Ireland, if what had taken place in that country could be called a reformation at all, had been wholly different from the movement which had almost extinguished Popery in England. The bulk of the nation had never ceased to adhere to the Romish forms, and the Reformation there had been simply a transfer of the property of the Church to the Protestants, unaccompanied by any corresponding change of belief in the people. The wealthier classes had in most instances gradually gone over to the dominant religion; and the Scotch and English settlers, who at different times had obtained grants or made purchases in the different provinces, and especially in Ulster, were all Protestants of one denomination or another. So that the Roman Catholic priests, whom the transfer of the Church property had reduced to a dependence on their flocks for support, drew their maintenance chiefly from the poorest class in the island, the tenant-farmers, agricultural labourers, and the tradesmen of the small towns. It is needless to dilate on the evils to which such a state of things must inevitably lead. They had been painfully experienced in the rebellion which had just been put down; and in all his negotiations with the leaders of the Roman Catholic party, which resulted in the most influential members of that body supporting the Union, the minister had taken care that his inclination to follow up that measure by others for the relief of the Roman Catholics should be clearly seen. If positive assurances of his intention were withheld, it was only because it was thought that the meditated concessions would be more efficacious in conciliating and tranquillising those who were to be affected by them if they appeared to flow from a spontaneous liberality of policy, than if they were granted only as the fulfilment of a stipulated condition.<sup>1</sup> More

<sup>1</sup> See a letter from Lord Castlereagh to Mr Pitt Castlereagh Correspondence, iv. 8), and a paper drawn up by Lord Castlereagh on Mr Pitt's retirement from office (Ib. p. 34)



than one of Mr. Pitt's speeches on the details connected with the Union gave, and was meant to give, an indication of his views and intentions; and, when the Union had become the law of the land, he felt that, without being guilty of some breach of faith, he could not delay to press forward the other parts of his scheme which he had thus allowed the Roman Catholics to see that he contemplated.

He was from the first aware that he should find difficulties in carrying the measures that he desired; that some of his colleagues were averse to them, and that the king himself entertained, or at least had entertained, scruples as to the propriety of his consenting to them. This last difficulty, however, he had a right to conceive to be not insuperable; for he was aware that a year or two before George III. had consulted the Chief Justice, Lord Kenyon, and the Attorney-General, Sir John Scott, on the subject, putting his perplexities before them in the form of a legal question, whether he were not absolutely precluded by the terms of the Coronation Oath from consenting to any relaxation of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics. Both of these great lawyers were, as politicians, strongly averse to any relaxation, but they combined a sound knowledge of their profession with uncompromising honesty, and unhesitatingly replied to the sovereign that his oath did not forbid, and never could have been intended to forbid, his giving his royal sanction to any law approved and passed by Parliament. Indeed, a knowledge of law was hardly required to establish that proposition; for, unless that principle were admitted, it would follow that the Parliament which framed the Coronation Oath must have had power to bind the whole Legislature for ever on one point; and, if on one, on all on which it desired to bind it. Pitt, therefore, might naturally have thought, and probably did think, that the assurances of two men of such eminence in their profession, for both of whom George III. had a personal esteem and regard, must have diminished, if not have removed, the king's reluctance

to adopt such measures as his Government might deem necessary for the welfare of the State, and for the preservation of their own honour. But unfortunately another lawyer, Lord Loughborough, the Chancellor, had since that time found an opportunity of discussing the matter with his Majesty. He was a native of Scotland, in which country feelings of animosity towards the Roman Catholics have always been particularly vehement; and as he, therefore, entertained the same opinions on the subject of the disabilities as the king, he easily convinced him, who was willing to be convinced, of the soundness of his former scruples; and, when he found that Pitt was occupied in framing a measure of concession, he determined to baffle him, hoping to secure from the royal gratitude his own continuance in office in the event, which he foresaw to be probable, of a general change in the administration. Both Pitt and he had learnt the best method of carrying a point with the king. To gain the royal consent the minister would have proceeded cautiously and gently, giving his Majesty abundant leisure to contemplate the question in all its bearings, and securing for himself time, by repeated discussions of details, gradually to soften and overcome his objections. To secure his dissent, the Chancellor knew the best way to be to take him by surprise, and hurry him into a decision. Accordingly, before Pitt had mentioned the subject to the king at all, Lord Loughborough showed him a letter which he himself had just received from Pitt, written in confidence as to a member of the Cabinet; and, skilfully adapting his law to the royal prejudices, easily persuaded the king to prefer his exposition of the law to that of Kenyon and Scott, and to believe that he could not, without perjury, sanction a single concession of any kind to the Roman Catholics. The king became greatly agitated. Nearly four months had still to elapse before the meeting of Parliament when Loughborough first disclosed to him the policy which was under



consideration, so that he had time to brood over it from one point of view exclusively. He could talk of nothing else ; he discussed the matter with his wife and daughters, with his equerries, and even with casual strangers ; he would read over his Coronation Oath, and declare with vehemence that no power could absolve him from the due observance of every sentence of it, and that, if he should violate it, he should from that moment cease to be a lawful king. His crown, he said, would pass to the House of Savoy. And, as the opening of Parliament drew nearer, his anxiety grew so uncontrollable that he could no longer wait for Pitt to broach the subject to him, but opened it himself at a levee, putting a direct question on the subject to Mr. Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, and declaring that he should reckon any one who proposed any relief of the Roman Catholics his personal enemy. Dundas contented himself with assuring his Majesty that he would find many people favorable to such a policy who, he was well aware, were not his enemies ; but so public a declaration of the king's views had rendered any further delay on Pitt's part impossible, and accordingly he at once wrote to the king, giving an outline of the concessions which he thought desirable, of their object, and their character. The details of the bill by which they were to be carried out he had not yet been able to mature. But he laid before his Majesty arguments to prove the intended measure to be as safe as it was necessary with a perspicuity and brevity absolutely unparalleled in State papers ; and, while abstaining from pressing his royal master for any immediate decision, expressed his conviction that, if the repugnance which the king had already expressed were insurmountable, it would be better that he himself should retire from office. It was insurmountable. The king offered indeed to content himself with Pitt's waiving the question for the future during the remainder of his reign ; but when he found that the minister looked on a retention

of office, if purchased by such a silence, as incompatible with his public duty, he acquiesced in his decision, and accepted his resignation.

No minister had ever fallen so gloriously. It was not easy to replace him, though Pitt magnanimously did everything in his power to facilitate the new arrangements. The royal choice fell on the Speaker, Mr. Addington, whom the king had for some time admitted to a degree of intimacy and political confidence, and whom, indeed, before he received Pitt's letter, he had employed to dissuade the minister from formally making the proposal of which he had been warned. It was a singular selection, for Mr. Addington had no official experience. Though he had been extremely intimate with Pitt from his first entrance into Parliament, his friend had evidently not considered his talents such as would add strength to his ministry. And though, as Speaker at a time when party spirit gave rise to some scenes of unusual violence, he had raised his reputation by the tact and temper with which he had maintained the dignity of the House and the Chair, yet the qualifications for that office were very different from those required of him who was to preside over the councils of the country at a most critical period, when it was not only engaged in a war of almost unprecedented magnitude, but when the very circumstances under which the new minister, whoever he might be, was to take office, increased the disarrangement of affairs, and added one more element of discussion to those which already divided the different parties in the State. As there was to be no change in any part of the policy that had hitherto been pursued, Pitt exerted himself with his colleagues to persuade them to retain their offices, pressing on them earnestly that they were in no respect bound to follow him in his resignation, and even in some instances making it a matter of personal favour to himself that they should not do so. Those who had not been friendly to the intended concessions naturally saw no reason why they should retire, and among them was Lord Hawkes-

bury, who, however, does not appear as yet to have considered the question as one of any great importance. He willingly consented to remain under Addington, and, in the redistribution of offices which necessarily took place, became a Cabinet minister, by a change which was decidedly for the benefit of the public service. The seals of the Foreign Office had hitherto been held by Lord Grenville, a cousin of Pitt, but a man of more industry than natural talent, of a style of oratory in which positiveness and assertion were unusually more conspicuous than power of argument, of unbounded vanity, of immoveable obstinacy, and of a most unconciliatory and arrogant demeanour, which he took no pains to soften even towards the king himself. They were now transferred to Lord Hawkesbury, and the peace which followed almost immediately was the direct fruit of the change in the department.

The changes, indeed, which had been arranged were not immediately completed, and for a moment there appeared a possibility that they might be avoided. The agitation into which the whole transaction had thrown George III. had brought back that derangement of intellect from which he had before suffered, and which, on this occasion, was accompanied with greater danger to his life also than had previously been the case. When he began to recover he enjoined his physician to tell Pitt that he alone was the cause of his illness; and Pitt, greatly shocked, and assured by Dr. Willis that it was of the most vital consequence to tranquillise the king's mind on a matter which he identified with the preservation of the Church of England, authorised the doctor to assure him that, whether in or out of office, he could never revive the question. It subsequently appeared that the same knowledge of the impossibility of changing the king's mind on the subject, and of mooted it at all without imperilling his understanding, and perhaps his life, led Fox, when invested with the same responsibility of office, to form the same resolution. And many of Pitt's adherents and personal friends, deeply

feeling how immeasurable was the distance between his capacity and that of Addington, and how indispensable it was, now that France was under the government of Buona-parte, that England also should have the ablest possible guidance, pressed upon Pitt the propriety of recalling his resignation. But, though he would probably have been willing to consent to do so if invited, he felt that the proposal could not with decency come from himself. And on the 17th of March, 1801, the new appointments were gazetted ; the only one, besides that of Lord Hawkesbury, that could be looked on as an improvement relating to the Great Seal, which, to the dismay of Lord Loughborough, who must have wished he could recall his act of treachery to his chief, and to the great amusement of every one else, was taken from him and delivered to the Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Lord Eldon.<sup>1</sup>

The negotiations for peace which were at once commenced rendered Lord Hawkesbury's department the most important in the whole administration. It is not impossible that Pitt himself may have had some share in placing him in it. For of all the new appointments it was the one of which he pronounced the most marked approval in one of the debates which necessarily arose on the subject of the recent changes. He challenged those who would depreciate the new ministry to point out a single member superior to Lord Hawkesbury. "The transcendent talents" of Fox he admitted indeed "to make him an exception to almost any rule in everything which required uncommon powers. But with that exception he knew no one superior to his noble friend in capacity for business." And that capacity for business was at once tested in the most arduous manner. Addington had never taken an active part in politics, and with finance he was especially unacquainted, though he had succeeded Pitt as Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as at the head of the Treasury. It was plain, even to himself, that the only chance which he could have of discharging

<sup>1</sup> Previously Sir John Scott, Attorney-General.

his new duties with credit lay in terminating the war ; and though Buonaparte had succeeded in forming the combination known as the Northern Confederacy to resist our interpretation of the maritime law of Europe, it was believed that he too was desirous of peace.<sup>1</sup> The chance, indeed, of the Northern Confederacy long continuing to support his views was more than problematical, since a fleet with Nelson on board had already sailed for the Baltic, and there could be little doubt of the issue of any action in which he was to take a principal part. But the confident anticipation of success in that expedition, which was reasonably entertained, did not make any change in the eagerness of the new administration for peace ; and accordingly, only four days after he had entered on office, Lord Hawkesbury was directed to intimate to the French Government "the disposition of his Majesty to enter into immediate negotiations." Pitt had entertained the same idea in the previous year ; and, intending once more to entrust the discussion of terms to Lord Malmesbury, had submitted his plan to the Cabinet, and had embodied the conditions on which he hoped to conclude a treaty in the following Cabinet minute :

*Sketch of a Plan of Peace settled at the Cabinet in 1800.*

1. That the possession of the Cape, Ceylon, and Cochin, is to be invariably insisted on as the *sine quâ non* condition of any treaty of peace, and that no modification is to be listened to on this subject, nor any condition inconsistent with it to be even made matter of negotiation.
2. That whatever places are restored to France or Holland on the Continent of India are to be held as commercial factories only, exercising power of internal jurisdiction, but so as not to interfere with the general government of the British possessions, nor to be in any case nor under any pretence fortified.
3. That a free commerce to the British possessions in India may be granted by treaty both to France and Holland, together

<sup>1</sup> The note conveying this intimation, dated March 21st, 1801, was sent through M. Otto, at that time in England as Commissioner for French prisoners.

with such particular regulations about saltpetre and other articles, as upon discussion shall be found just and practicable.

4. That all the other conquests made by this country may be made matter of negotiation, and that, subject to the following instructions, the restitution of such part of them may be stipulated for as shall be fairly compensated by the advantages to result to this country from the Continental peace.

With this view it is to be observed that there are but two points in which such compensation can be made to England. These are—

1. The evacuation of Egypt, should the French army not have quitted that country either in consequence of the treaty signed by General Kleber, or of the attacks now meditated by the Turkish forces.
2. Such an arrangement of affairs in Holland and the Netherlands as may rescue those countries from their present dependence on France, and afford to Europe some security for their future independence.

In return for these points, and in proportion as they shall be more or less satisfactorily arranged, we are enabled to treat respecting the following objects, which comprise the whole of what we have conquered during the war, except what is specified in the first article of this paper.

We have taken from France,—Martinique, Ste. Lucie, Tobago, Goree, St. Pierre, and Miquelon, and the French factories in the East Indies.

From Spain,—Minorca and Trinidad.

From Holland (besides what is above mentioned),—Surinam, Berbice, Demerary, Essequibo, and the Spice Islands.

The extent of our cessions out of this list is to depend, as already stated, on what we obtain on the two points above mentioned.

With respect to Egypt, the evacuation is all we have to ask, and we are bound by the treaty of defensive alliance with Turkey not to make peace without it.

With respect to Holland, it does not appear probable that any sacrifice we could make would induce France to restore the Stadtholder, and to place the government decidedly in his hands; nor would even that arrangement be secure or permanent unless the independence of the Netherlands were satisfactorily provided for.

On the other hand, France can have no attachment to the actual Directory or Constitution in Holland.

Some middle line may therefore easily be found in this respect, the real value of which will depend on the nature of the arrangement respecting the Netherlands.

Four different arrangements may possibly come in question in this respect, supposing France to abandon the claim of retaining these provinces.

These are the following, stated in the order of preference as they affect our interests :

1. The connecting the settlement of the Netherlands with the exchange of Bavaria, or giving those provinces to the Elector, in addition to as considerable a portion of German territory as can be secured for him in any general arrangement on that subject that may take place.
2. The giving them to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in exchange for that country, which might either be given to Austria, or made by other arrangements the means of making a satisfactory settlement of affairs in Italy.
3. The giving them to some less considerable prince, to hold as a separate sovereignty under the guaranty of the Great Powers, and possibly as annexed to the Germanic body.
4. The forming them into a separate and independent republic, under a government formed as nearly as possible on the grounds of their ancient constitution.

These are the different objects to be aimed at, and in this order.

With respect to our conquests, we consider the restoration of the Spice Islands and of the two settlements of Demerary and Surinam to Holland as the least disadvantageous of all the cessions we may have to make ; and, although those possessions are of immense value and importance to Holland, yet the king's Government does not think that, in consenting to their restitution, even as the price only of the evacuation of Egypt (but certainly if, with that, we obtain only the fourth of the arrangements respecting the Netherlands), any considerable sacrifice of the interests of this country would be made.

The negotiation may more probably turn on the comparative value of the arrangements to be made respecting our other



conquests, and respecting the Netherlands according to one of the three first plans above mentioned.

If Martinique and Ste. Lucie can both be retained in the West Indies, and Minorca in Europe, and Trinidad, Tobago, the small Newfoundland Islands, and Goree, with the Indian factories, restored in return for the third plan, this would be considered as a very advantageous peace to England.

If we obtain either of the two former, we might consent to substitute Trinidad and Tobago for Martinique and Ste. Lucie, or we might ultimately accept one of these three islands (considering, however, Tobago always as necessarily annexed to Trinidad if we retain that island) together with Minorca, if by so doing we can secure the first of the plans respecting the Netherlands, or any other arrangement of those provinces equally satisfactory to us with that.

In all other points our negotiator is to second the views of Austria, and he is to stipulate for peace for Naples and Portugal on the *status ante bellum*, no conquests having been made by France from them.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt's desire for peace was not diminished by his own change of position. He at once communicated the minute to Addington, and it served as a guide to the new Cabinet in the proposals they made and in the concessions to which they consented. The French Government, or, it may save trouble to say, Buonaparte the First Consul (for the other two consuls were from the first mere cyphers, meant in some degree to disguise from the French for a time the fact of their subjection to a single master), empowered M. Otto to conduct the preliminary discussions, and throughout the summer a brisk correspondence passed between him and the British Secretary of State. But the very first step taken by the French was calculated to raise a suspicion of their insincerity. Otto proposed an armistice, evidently with the hope that it might be in time

<sup>1</sup> The precise date of this document does not appear; but the fact that Malta is not mentioned in it proves the time at which it was drawn up to be anterior to September 15th, 1800, when that island was surrendered to Nelson's squadron.



to save the allies of France in the Baltic from the attack of our fleet. The request came too late, for it was subsequently learnt that on the 2d of April, the very day on which it was made, Nelson had annihilated the Danish defences at Copenhagen. But Lord Hawkesbury could not forget the treacherous use which the First Consul had made of the armistice into which he cajoled the Austrian commander in the middle of the battle of Rivoli,<sup>1</sup> and declined falling into a similar snare. On particular subjects M. Otto admitted that he was waiting for precise instructions, but the two plenipotentiaries began at once to discuss the general principles of the intended treaty, and the Frenchman explained that "the point on which the negotiation would be likely to turn would be Egypt, and the question for discussion would be whether France should relinquish Egypt, Great Britain relinquishing the whole or some part of her conquests, or whether France should retain Egypt, Great Britain preserving her conquests. M. Otto also stated that he was authorized to assure Lord Hawkesbury, in consequence of what had passed at their former interview, that the British Government could not be more hostile to the principles of Jacobinism than the First Consul."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A part of the French army was defeated, and the whole was surrounded, with its retreat completely cut off, when Buonaparte sent a flag of truce to Alvinzi, requesting an armistice for half an hour, as he had some propositions to make in consequence of the sudden arrival of a courier with fresh despatches from Paris. There was no such courier; but, as Alvinzi was weak enough to suspend his operations for the time required, Buonaparte employed it to extricate his troops from their difficulties, and to prepare an attack which proved fatal to his dupe and the Austrian army. (Alison, xx. § 144.)

<sup>2</sup> The passage within inverted commas is taken from a minute of a conversation between Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto, held April 2d. The minute exists in the Liverpool Papers. And whenever a passage is given in a similar manner (unless some particular statement respecting it is made), it is a quotation from some document preserved among those Papers.

Buonaparte was sincere in his denunciations of Jacobinism, believing that all the plots against his life, of which more than one had been

The retention of Egypt by the French, as well as the permanence of the Northern Confederacy, had in fact been already decided by events, though the news detected, originated with the Jacobin party, till Fouché convinced him that the infernal machine conspiracy had been concocted by some of the Royalists. But George III. had no idea that Jacobinism could be extinguished except by means which Buonaparte was not inclined to employ. I subjoin a brief but characteristic note written by him to Lord Hawkesbury a day or two after the murder of the Czar Paul had become known :—

“Kew, 1st May, 1801, 50m. P.M.

“I am infinitely pleased with Lord Hawkesbury's attention in so speedily transmitting the despatch from Lord Carysfort, which confirms the good news from Egypt transmitted yesterday. I am anxious to hear from Russia as to the line of conduct embraced by the new emperor with regard to the royal cause in France ; for I own I think there is no destruction of Jacobinism unless royalty is re-established in that country, though I may have my doubts as to the person who may best answer that purpose.

“GEORGE R.”

I may add, since both in Lord Malmesbury's diary and in that of Mr. Rose the king is represented as speaking slightly of Lord Hawkesbury's talents for business, &c. (though Mr. Rose admits that on this point his Majesty subsequently changed his opinion), that though no man was less in the habit of paying compliments than the king, unless he fully meant what he said, his early letters to Lord Hawkesbury are full of expressions of the warmest approval. On the 29th of April he writes to him, “I have signed the two warrants he (Lord Liverpool) forwarded through my excellent Northern Secretary of State,” using the same form of description to which he had been accustomed in the earlier part of his reign, before the duties of the two chief secretaries were defined as they were afterwards. And a few days later his sentiments are still more unmistakeable, when he writes

“Kew, May 9th, 1801, 20m. p. 7 A.M.

“The King is extremely pleased with the information he has received from Lord Hawkesbury of the intention of sending Count Bernstoff to settle the differences between this Court and that of Denmark ; the more so as it cannot but place in the most advantageous light to the public the conduct of the new administration, and more particularly of Lord Hawkesbury, as he will have the treating with the Count, who is a very warm man, and it will require the good temper of the Northern Secretary of State to keep him in bounds. And it would seem that a little stiffness and restraint is more likely to end the business with credit than at first too much appearance of desire of ending the business.

“GEORGE R.”

had not yet reached Europe. On the 21st of March Sir Ralph Abercromby had given Menou, who, on the murder of Kleber, had succeeded that general as commander-in-chief of the army which Buonaparte had left behind him, a decisive defeat at Alexandria; and the only real question with regard to France and Egypt was whether the relics of the French army should be permitted to return home with their arms in their hands, or should be detained by the English general as prisoners of war. Two months before the preliminaries were signed, Menou himself confessed this to be the state of affairs, and was glad by any sacrifice to purchase the permission of his conquerors to rejoin his old commander as a free man. The French occupation, therefore, of Egypt soon ceased to furnish a topic for discussion; but it is probable, though the news of Abercromby's victory had not yet reached England, that Buonaparte had heard of it when, on the 16th of April, he ordered Otto to interrupt the negotiation, with a statement that the instigators of the attempt, which in the previous December had been made to assassinate him, were living in England, and in the pay of the English Government. He avowed his conviction that the English ministry was incapable of having hired or encouraged the assassins, but by a declaration that, if such an attempt had been made in London and instigated by men who were seeking shelter in Paris, he should at once arrest them, and deliver them up to the British Government, he evidently indicated a demand that the English minister would surrender those whom he named. It was plain that, even while disavowing any idea of imputing the least complicity in the plot to the British Government, the First Consul did in fact insinuate it; and Lord Hawkesbury in his reply showed that he felt such to be his intention, and reproved it with "the warmest indignation." But, at the same time, after reminding M. Otto that no proof beyond his mere assertion had been furnished that any one implicated in any attempt on the First Consul's life was to be found in England, he

did not shrink from avowing his willingness, if proof sufficient to fix any one residing in this country with the guilt of such a crime should be afforded, to take the strongest steps which our laws could permit to bring the criminals to punishment.

But it would seem that Buonaparte's sole design in instructing Otto to make this complaint was to create a sort of diversion. Delay was his real object, that he might have time to try whether the events of the summer would place him in a more favourable position for treating. He was ostentatiously parading preparations for an invasion of England, though it may be doubtful whether he as yet ever seriously intended to undertake such an enterprise. He had also excited the Spanish Government to make an attack on Portugal, which at the end of June he seconded by an invasion of that country with a French army, under the command of his own brother-in-law, General Leclerc; and, now that Egypt was wrested from him, he hoped to be able to set off acquisitions made at the expense of our ancient ally against our own conquests in the East and West Indies. If, however, he had formed any real design to attempt an invasion of this country, Nelson soon compelled him to lay it aside; and the corruption<sup>1</sup> of his own generals reduced the advantages he had hoped to extort from Portugal to a very insignificant amount; so that he was forced, after a brief delay, to continue the negotiation on its original footing, with indeed a certain lowering of his tone with respect to Egypt, his chance of retaining which country by force of arms could no longer be pretended to have any existence. At the same time, he tried to alarm Lord Hawkesbury by the threat that, if peace were not at once concluded, France and all her allies were ready to concentrate their forces against England.<sup>2</sup> But in the same

<sup>1</sup> Alison (cxxxiv. 62) affirms that the French generals took large bribes from the Portuguese Government, and that Leclerc himself in this way obtained 200,000*l*.

<sup>2</sup> "La cour de Londres, si elle veut sincèrement la paix, peut-elle,

despatch in which this menace was insinuated M. Otto admitted that the acquisitions made by France on the Continent justified some of the demands made by Great Britain, though not the retention by her of Trinidad, Martinique, Malta, Ceylon, and all the territories conquered from Tippo Sahib. Perhaps Buonaparte's feeling of the extent to which his position was altered by the defeats of his army in Egypt was most clearly shown by the final suggestion, that he might acquiesce in our preserving all our acquisitions in India and restore Portugal to the *status ante bellum*, if we, on our parts, would agree to the same *status ante bellum* being re-established in the Mediterranean and America.

Of the menace, Lord Hawkesbury in his reply very properly disdained to take any notice. The *status ante bellum* for America he altogether rejected, pointing out that this would involve not only a restitution of those islands in the West Indies which we had wrested from France, but of those which we had also taken from Spain

aujourd'hui que les alliés sont en mesure de concentrer tous leurs moyens contre elle, prétendre à conserver des conquêtes qu'elle doit en grande partie aux désordres de la Révolution Française et aux efforts de la coalition ?" (Extract from a despatch of M. Otto, June 18th, 1801.) But in fact France had as yet no ally bound to co-operate with her against England but Spain and Holland ; and the result of St. Vincent and the capture of most of the West India Islands showed how little was to be apprehended from Spain. Otto's despatch proceeds, "Cependant on reconnaît que les grands événemens survenus en Europe, et les changemens arrivés dans les limites des grands Etats du Continent, peuvent autoriser une partie des demandes du Gouvernement Britannique ; mais comment ce Gouvernement pourrait-il exiger la conservation de Malthe, de Ceylon, de tous les Etats conquis sur Tippo Saib, de la Trinité et de la Martinique ? Le soussigné est autorisé à demander de my Lord Hawkesbury si dans le cas où le Gouvernement Français accèderait aux arrangemens proposés pour les Grandes Indes par l'Angleterre, et adopterait *l'ante bellum* pour le Portugal, sa M. B. consentirait elle-même à ce que le *status ante bellum* fut rétabli dans la Méditerranée et en Amérique ?" "America" throughout this negotiation includes the West Indian Islands, nearly the whole of which we had made ourselves masters of.

and Holland. He offered, however, as a recompense for a return to the former state of affairs in Portugal, to agree to the same principle with respect to Spain. And he argued that the *status ante bellum* for the Mediterranean, if adopted, would not only require from us the cession of Malta, but from the French the restitution of those conquests which they had made on the borders of the Mediterranean; of the county of Nice and of the other territories which had been wrested from the King of Sardinia; with the restoration of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the rest of Italy to their former independence. In a subsequent despatch he refuted by a reference to his former proposals, which were in M. Otto's possession, the utterly false statement that, since the commencement of the discussions, Britain had raised her demands; though, as he also showed, she had had a right to raise them carefully reserved to her by a declaration which he himself had made in April, that "in the event of the evacuation of Egypt by the French previously to the signing of the preliminaries, he should not consider himself as bound to adhere to their full extent to the conditions," which he then proposed. He reminded M. Otto that, from his sovereign's "invariable anxiety to provide for the interests of his allies, and from his sincere desire to facilitate the attainment of peace, he had been authorised to offer, in addition to the restitutions which he had already proposed, the island of Trinidad," which would secure a complete re-establishment of "the *status ante bellum* for Spain, in consideration of the *status ante bellum* for Portugal." If, as "the French Government had distinctly admitted, his Majesty was entitled to a compensation out of his conquests for the important acquisitions which France had obtained upon the Continent," it was impossible for him to propose to retain less than he now demanded.

Otto, or rather his master Buonaparte, and his minister, the celebrated Talleyrand, felt that they were getting worsted in the argument. They began to appeal to our

moderation and "regard for the interests of humanity. A distant island more or less could not be a sufficient reason for prolonging the miseries of the world." And their practical comment on this maxim thus laid down was a demand that had never been made before, that, while France should retain all her conquests except "the ports of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean belonging to the Pope and the King of Naples," Britain should restore all that she had made with the single exception of Ceylon; the only other advantage which she was to derive being a restoration of Portugal to its former integrity. What was particularly demanded was that Malta should be restored to the Order of its ancient Knights (from whom, it will be remembered, it was not the English but the French who had captured it; the English had only taken it from the French), though M. Otto was willing to agree that its fortifications should be destroyed. In reply, Lord Hawkesbury declined entering into any "explanations relative to the island of Malta," except on the condition of the French Government agreeing to a reasonable "arrangement respecting the West Indies conformably to the principle which had been already recognised as the just basis of negotiation." And his firmness on this point made the French plenipotentiary alter his tone. Though on the 20th of July M. Otto had required the absolute cession by Great Britain of all her conquests in the West Indies, on the 11th of August it was "with sincere satisfaction" that he found the British Government resolved to retain some of them; and the hint that the acquiescence of France in her so doing might be met on her part by a reconsideration of the question of Malta "removed the only obstacle" to a pacification.

Yet so innate was the spirit of insincerity and trickery in the French Government, that in his very next communication, made, as M. Otto informed Lord Hawkesbury, in consequence of an express which he had just received from Paris, it was proposed to confine the acquisitions which



Great Britain should retain to the single island of Sainte Lucie. The British minister, in reply, threatened to break off the negotiations altogether. And once more his steady adherence to his former declarations were rewarded. On the 1st of October, only two days after he had written that "if the French Government should persist in any further demands there could no longer remain any prospect of the negotiation being brought to a happy conclusion," M. Otto was authorised to sign preliminaries, and it was agreed that plenipotentiaries should be sent by both Governments to Amiens to conclude a definitive treaty.

The minister whom our Government selected was Lord Cornwallis, a nobleman of high character, who, if he had not been very successful as a soldier in North America, as Governor-General in India had shown considerable energy and capacity, and as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at the time of the Union had proved himself possessed of great patience and address. Lord Malmesbury, whom Pitt had designed to employ the year before, had become afflicted with deafness to such a degree that he was no longer desirous of diplomatic employment of so delicate a character; and the instructions drawn up by Lord Hawkesbury for Lord Cornwallis were so precise as to render his want of experience as a negotiator of but little importance. Indeed most of the points which had been topics of dispute had been so settled in the preliminary articles that they were adopted without alteration. It had been agreed that we were to retain Ceylon and Trinidad, and to restore the rest of our conquests; while, as a counterbalance to those great concessions on our part, France was bound to withdraw her troops from the dominions of the Pope and King of Naples, and to guarantee the integrity of Portugal. Malta we consented to restore to the Knights of St. John, on condition of its being further placed under the guarantee of the Emperor of Russia. But, as this Order was at the time in a state of disorganization, not having even a Grand Master, it was evidently requisite to re-establish it on a proper



footing, that it might be in a condition to resume its authority, before we could consent to withdraw from our occupation of so important an island.<sup>1</sup>

So completely, however, was the signature of the preliminary articles regarded as practically the conclusion of the treaty, that, when Parliament met at the beginning of November, both parties agreed in looking on them in that light, and debated their merits and the conduct of the ministry in agreeing to them as unreservedly as if no further negotiation of any kind had been pending. The concessions which we had made in resigning so many of our conquests, and in leaving France in possession of so many of her acquisitions, were most vehemently attacked in the House of Lords by the late Foreign Secretary, Lord Grenville; and in the House of Commons by his brother, Mr. Thomas Grenville, and Mr. Windham. It was no slight proof that the objections made were specious

<sup>1</sup> There was no point, however, on which the French Government insisted more strongly than that we should withdraw our troops at once. A paper delivered in by M. Otto September 30th, the day before the signature of the preliminaries, contains the following sentence: "Il (le Gouvernement Français) ne consentira jamais à une clause ou rédaction d'où il pourrait résulter que Malte ne serait pas évacuée par les troupes Anglaises immédiatement après la ratification du traité définitif. Le tems qui s'écoulera entre la conclusion des préliminaires et celle du traité définitif sera suffisant pour que l'ordre et la Puissance garante ayant pris leurs mesures pour assurer l'occupation de Malte." It was owing solely to the unyielding firmness of Lord Hawkesbury that Malta was not evacuated with the precipitation thus insisted on (in which event we should have found it difficult to reconquer it), but that it remained in our hands at the renewal of the war. It may be added that if we had evacuated it inconsiderately we should only have been laughed at by Buonaparte himself for our simplicity. He never seriously expected that we should relinquish it, and perhaps his pertinacity as to the precise language of the articles relating to it was dictated mainly by his desire to have a plausible pretext for future rupture. De Bourrienne tells us, "Je ne cessais de dire au Premier Consul qu'à la place des Anglais il n'en ferait pas autrement, et je lui prédis sans balancer que cette île serait la principale cause de la rupture de la paix. Il pensait comme moi." (*Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, vol. 4, xix. 303.)

rather than solid, that the policy of the ministry in making peace on such conditions was supported both by Pitt and Fox. Pitt argued that, after the dissolution of the continental alliance by the Peace of Luneville, it was impossible for us to pursue any other line of conduct but that of making peace, as to the conditions on which it was concluded, he was more anxious about the tone and character of the peace than for any particular object; and he thought it wiser even to accept terms short of what the country might be strictly entitled to than to risk the negotiation by too obstinate adherence to any particular point. And this was not only the language which he thought it becoming to him to hold in his place in Parliament, in consideration of the circumstances under which those who had concluded the treaty had come into power; but his deliberate opinion, as he expressed it in letters to his private friends.<sup>1</sup> And Fox, differing from those of his followers who disparaged Ceylon and Trinidad, affirmed them to be most important acquisitions; and "could not flatter himself that we could have obtained peace on better terms. If too much importance," he truly said, "had been attached to trifles, we should have risked another year of war, which in itself would have been a great evil. He believed, indeed, that better terms might have been obtained a year before; but at present, as to the terms and tone of the treaty, he fully coincided with the ministry." But, from his position as the minister chiefly responsible for it, the speaker whose language was most carefully scanned was Lord Hawkesbury. As on the debate which took place subsequently on the merits of the definitive treaty, he naturally extended and amplified the argument he used on this occasion,<sup>2</sup> it is sufficient to state

<sup>1</sup> Lord Stanhope *Life*, vol. iii, p. 351; quotes a letter of his to Mr. Long, dated October 1, 1801, in which he says, "The terms, though not in every point precisely all that one could wish, are certainly highly creditable, and on the whole very advantageous."

<sup>2</sup> His speech, however, on this occasion was one that made a great impression on the House. In Lord Colchester's *Diary* (p. 376, *seq.*) different correspondents of the speaker are quoted as extolling it in

now that the Opposition in the Lower House did not venture on a division ; and in the House of Lords, where the obstinacy of Lord Grenville forced one on, he was unable to muster more than ten votes to support the opinions which he advanced on the subject.

This failure of its opponents was, of course, no slight encouragement to the Government to proceed in the course it had already marked out for itself. The negotiation received a slight additional interest from the circumstance that the discussions on the part of France were conducted by the brother of the First Consul, Joseph Buonaparte, who afterwards became King of Naples, and then of Spain, and as such had a narrow escape of being brought to England as a prisoner after the battle of Vittoria. On the first arrival of Lord Cornwallis, Talleyrand proposed to transfer the seat of negotiation from Amiens, the place which had been originally fixed upon, to Paris itself ; or, at all events, to settle some of the most important points in dispute in that city ; and Lord Cornwallis, who was highly satisfied with the manner and language of Buonaparte when he was presented to him, would not have thought such a step objectionable, if it would have led to his discussing the matters in question "in confidential interviews with the First Consul himself." The language of the First Consul himself, as he reported it to Lord Hawkesbury, was studiously complimentary ; and in the exchange of such courtesies the British negotiator was in respect no more remiss.

the warmest terms. Mr. Corry says, "Lord Hawkesbury was able and successful in his speech beyond former character." And of his speech in a second debate the week after he says, "On the Convention yesterday Lord Hawkesbury was excellent. His character in the House of Commons rises daily and justly. His speech was better than that on the peace ;" and Wilberforce's friend, Lord Muncaster, writes, "You do not need from me any character of the debate ; but I cannot help saying to you that Lord Hawkesbury's was the most chaste speech of a man of business I almost ever heard." Lord Sheffield uses somewhat similar expressions.

*Private.*]

Paris, November 10, 1801.

MY DEAR LORD,

It was with very sincere satisfaction that I received your despatch of the 6th, as it has relieved me from the most delicate and difficult part of my immediate business with the Chief Consul.

I have had this morning my first audience, at which Talleyrand of course was present. Buonaparte was gracious in the highest degree. He inquired particularly after his Majesty, and the state of his health; and spoke of the British nation in terms of great respect, intimating that, as long as we remained friends, there would be no interruption of the peace of Europe.

I told him that the horrors which succeeded the Revolution had created a general alarm; that all the neighbouring nations dreaded the contagion; that when, for the happiness of mankind, and of France in particular, he was called on to fill his present station, we knew him only as a hero and a conqueror, but the good order and tranquillity which the country now enjoyed, made us respect him as a statesman and a legislator, and had removed our apprehensions of having connexion and intercourse with France.

Lauriston informed me that the First Consul would see me without the presence of a third person before my departure for Amiens; but this information became less interesting to me since the good news which you have imparted to me respecting Hanover.

The concourse of people at the fireworks last night was very great, no carriages were allowed to pass but those of the foreign ministers; and as I drove through the streets I was astonished to find such a multitude so perfectly quiet, and heard nothing near my coach but expressions of civility.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

CORNWALLIS.

When, however, he found that Talleyrand only desired to keep the conduct of the negotiation wholly in his own hands, instead of trusting it to Joseph Buonaparte, he changed his mind as to the propriety of consenting to any alteration in the first arrangement. Joseph, as

he wrote to Lord Hawkesbury, "had the character of being a well-meaning, although not a very able man," and he hoped that "his near connexion with the First Consul might perhaps be in some degree a check on the spirit of chicanery and intrigue which animated the Minister of the Interior." He therefore adhered to the plan previously laid down for him ; and, though he had one or two preliminary discussions on different subjects before he left Paris, they were held with Joseph Buonaparte, and were therefore of much the same character as they would have been if they had taken place in Amiens. Mr. Jackson, who was our minister at Paris while Lord Cornwallis was at Amiens, and who was among those who took an unfavorable view of the treaty, in talking it over with Lord Malmesbury, who shared his views, attributed many of the stipulations or concessions with which he was dissatisfied to Lord Cornwallis himself, "his drowsiness, and his total want of practice and experience in matters of that kind ;"<sup>1</sup> and, perhaps, had the plenipotentiary had more experience of the diplomatic, and especially of the French diplomatic character, his suspicions might have been in some degree awakened by the earnestness displayed by M. Buonaparte in extolling his own integrity before any imputations had been cast upon it. He commenced his first interview by a declaration "that it was his intention to deal fairly and openly, that he was a stranger to the arts of negotiation, and should not attempt to carry any point by cunning or chicanery ;" and Lord Cornwallis, who coincided in the wish thus expressed to conduct the conferences between them with frankness and sincerity, implicitly believed him. More penetrating judges would probably have thought differently at the time ; certainly those who are acquainted with the absolute dominion which the younger brother exercised over all his family, and the almost invariably bad faith which characterised his own dealings with other nations, will not be surprised to hear that, at the end of a month, Lord Cornwallis found

<sup>1</sup> Lord Malmesbury, iv. 71.

that articles in the intended treaty, after they had been formally agreed to, were surreptitiously altered; that, in some, important sentences had been omitted, in others significant phrases had been inserted, in one a change of the highest importance had been silently introduced; and that, finally, his secretary discovered that, after Lord Cornwallis had believed the arrangements of the matters contained in those articles to have been fully concluded, the document relating to them had been carefully revised by the French plenipotentiary, who with his own hand had made a number of corrections "replete with matter and expressions calculated to ensnare, to throw upon Lord Cornwallis himself the odium of the delay, and upon the whole to create confusion in all the proceedings."

One of the alterations thus dishonestly foisted in would have represented us as agreeing to the placing of Malta under the protection and guarantee, not of the Czar, who was a prince sufficiently powerful to render them effectual, but of the King of Naples, whom recent transactions had proved to be completely at the mercy of, and therefore under the influence of, the French. The trickery, however, which was thus detected tended to defeat its own object. As a matter of course, it strengthened the hands of Lord Cornwallis; and the neutrality of Malta, after we should have evacuated it, was finally settled as we had proposed. In another matter also he succeeded in carrying the views of his own Government in opposition to the aims of the First Consul. Buonaparte so completely ignored his allies, even at the very moment that he was professing to be acting in their interest, that he desired wholly to exclude their representatives from the Conference at Amiens, leaving any terms which we might make with them, the Governments of Spain and Holland, or, as the latter was now styled, the Batavian Republic, to be settled in subordinate and separate treaties. But Lord Hawkesbury, in a very able and argumentative despatch, insisted that the treaty about to be concluded should "be one general treaty of



peace, comprehending the interests of all the Powers engaged in the war, and that there should not be distinct treaties concluded with each state separately." He showed by reference to the Peace of 1763, that this had been the course adopted on similar occasions in times past, and required that, if he had not such already, "the French plenipotentiary should obtain from his Government the necessary full powers enabling him to conclude a general treaty of that description." The result of this resolution on our part was that those who had been the allies of France in the war at once despatched, as they were probably anxious to do, plenipotentiaries to Amiens to act on their behalf, Senhor Azara being the Spanish minister, and M. Schimmelpenninck the envoy of the new Dutch Government. No further difficulty of any importance occurred, and on the 27th of March the definitive treaty was formally signed.

There was a general belief that the pacification it had effected would not be of long duration. The king himself during the progress of the negotiation had more than once intimated to Lord Hawkesbury his conviction that the "conduct of the French could not be built upon;" and after its conclusion he expressed the same opinion to Lord Malmesbury, calling it "an experimental peace, and nothing else." It had been, however, he added, "unavoidable, because he had been abandoned by everybody, allies and all." And this feeling of the probable instability of the peace, which more than one act of Buonaparte's during the negotiation had greatly increased,<sup>1</sup> was one of the greatest

<sup>1</sup> "*April 8th.*—Pitt told Lord Malmesbury that 'he had, when the preliminaries were signed, thought that Buonaparte had satisfied his ambition, and would rest contented with the power and reputation he had acquired; . . . that, however, all that had passed since had convinced him that he had been in error, and that the electing himself President of the Italian Republic, the attainment of Louisiana, the two Floridas, and the island of Elba, left no doubt on his mind that he  
—or would remain the same rapacious insatiable plunderer,

difficulties with which the Cabinet had to struggle in the debate which ensued. In fact, the treaty contained one article which it was well known it would be almost impossible to execute strictly. It was stipulated that the British forces "should evacuate Malta and its dependencies within three months from the exchange of the ratifications, or sooner if possible;" and that "at that epoch it should be given up to the Order in its present state, provided the Grand Master, or commissaries fully authorised according to the statutes of the Order, should be in the island to take possession, and the force which was to be provided by his Sicilian Majesty" (who was to be invited to garrison the different fortresses in the island for one year) "should have arrived." But it was almost certain that neither of these events, the arrival of a Grand Master or of a Neapolitan garrison, could take place within three months. There had been no Grand Master at all for many years. The knights had dwindled in number to a small force; their ancient spirit had fallen in a still more conspicuous degree when they surrendered the island to the French without striking a single blow in its defence; and they had become objects of such universal dislike to the native Maltese, and were so conscious of their unpopularity, that it was not likely that many of them would be induced to return at all. It was, therefore, from the first, nearly certain that we should be unable to evacuate the island by the time appointed in the treaty, while it was almost equally sure, considering the extreme persistency with which the First Consul had tried every expedient to create and maintain for France an influence over the island, that our failure to execute the treaty on this point to its very letter would form the ground of angry complaint.

with as little good faith, as he formerly found him to be; that still he did not regret having spoken in favour of the peace; it was become a necessary measure; and *rest* for England, however short, was desirable." — Malmesbury's *Diary*, iv. 64.



This, however, though felt to be a difficulty by the ministers themselves, was not much dwelt upon by the Opposition in their attacks upon the treaty. It was remarkable that, while Pitt himself sincerely and energetically supported it, those who put themselves in the first rank of its assailants had been his colleagues till his resignation, and were those who had most identified themselves with him by following him in his retirement. Lord Grenville in the House of Lords, and Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, moved addresses to the king censuring the peace as one which exposed the kingdom to great danger, since by it we had made great sacrifices without any compensating concessions having been procured from France. In a biography of one who was at that time a member of the House of Commons, we may confine ourselves to the debate in that House, and principally to the part which Lord Hawkesbury himself bore in it. Mr. Windham founded his arguments chiefly on his opinion of the insatiable character of the existing French Government (an opinion in which, as we have seen, Pitt had lately felt compelled to coincide). He maintained that the arrangements which had been made with respect to Malta, however we might flatter ourselves, were a virtual surrender of that island to France. If the King of Naples should send a garrison to the fortresses, the putting them into his hands, circumstanced as he was, was an immediate introduction of the French. In the same way he maintained that the restoration of the Cape of Good Hope, to which also we had bound ourselves, would prove a cession of that stronghold, the half-way house to India, to the same all-grasping Power. He equally disapproved of those articles of the treaty which had allotted to France a portion of the Portuguese Guiana, and the fertile province of Louisiana. He could draw no distinction between the present form of government in France and the Jacobinism which was rampant seven years before; and our naval victories, to which there had been

no interruption, ought to have saved us from a peace which left, or rather made, France so formidable.

Lord Hawkesbury<sup>1</sup> himself undertook to reply to Windham; and, disdaining a mere avoidance of censure, boldly challenged the approval of the House for what had been done. He moved an amendment to the proposed address, to the effect that "the House was fully sensible that his Majesty had wisely consulted the interests of his people in forming a definitive treaty on the basis of the preliminaries; that it relied on his Majesty's well-known disposition to adhere with the most scrupulous fidelity to his engagements; but that it entertained a perfect confidence that he would be always prepared to defend against every encroachment the great sources of the wealth, commerce, and naval power of the empire. And that it was firmly persuaded that his Majesty's faithful subjects would be always ready to support the honour of his crown, and the rights, laws, and liberties of their country, with the same spirit they had manifested during the war which was now happily brought to a conclusion." And he supported his amendment with arguments which even his antagonists admitted to be profound and able, and which his partisans maintained to be irresistible. He reminded the House that "at the very moment when the present ministry were entering upon office, the country was losing its chief ally upon the Continent, the only one which, from the position of its dominions, and from its power, could be expected to make a formidable resistance to the progress of the French armies, by the Peace of Luneville. Previously, Britain had been the head of a confederacy. That peace placed her, instead, in the position of being the sole and

<sup>1</sup> The Annual Register, which at this time was written with great violence of party spirit, and was still under the influence of Dr. Laurence, who had edited it till the close of the preceding century, and who took a warm part against the ministry in this very debate, describes Lord Hawkesbury's speech on this occasion as "by much the ablest defence of the treaty which was made in either House of Parliament." Ann. 1802, p. 152.)

unassisted mark for a hostile league. The enmity of the Baltic Powers she defeated by her promptitude of action ; and, having quelled them, we were able to negotiate with France. But with her we could only negotiate for ourselves and Portugal, not for our allies in Germany, who had already settled their own affairs at Luneville. And for Portugal we did obtain good terms, even the restoration of some of the territory of which France had previously despoiled her. For ourselves, we retained two islands of the highest value and importance, Ceylon in the East Indies, Trinidad in the West. And though we did not preserve Malta, the House would remember that we had never intended to do so. We always designed to restore it to the Knights of St. John. And henceforth their possession of the island was to be guaranteed to them by the joint agreement of all the principal Powers of Europe. Great stress had been laid by those who censured the peace on the acquisitions made by France since the commencement of the war. It was true she had obtained Louisiana from Spain ; but she had possessed that province before, and had willingly ceded it to Spain as a settlement which had proved of but little value. And in India she had lost ground : neither in the West nor East Indies could her possessions be compared to ours, either in extent or in prosperity. Her navy and commerce, in every part of the world, was still less on a footing of equality with ours. In the course of the war, she had lost more than half her fleet, and all her commerce. He maintained that a treaty that left us and the French in such a relative condition, could not be considered anything but honorable to us. He could never agree with the doctrine laid down by some gentlemen that, whenever any of the continental Powers became involved in a quarrel with France, it was our business, without considering how the question affected our own external and internal interests, immediately to embark in a war. It was not expedient for us to continue the war for Holland and

the Netherlands, much less was it justifiable to continue it for Italy. And, indeed, those Powers which were more nearly connected with that country than ourselves, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, had approved or acquiesced in the new constitution that had lately been established in Italy. As to the faults of omission which had been alleged against the present treaty, the principal stress appeared to be laid on the non-renewal of certain other treaties, but the truth was that the events of the war had so completely unhinged the foundations of all former treaties, that it would be almost impossible, if they were renewed, to bring them to bear at all upon the present political state of Europe. If we had sanctioned the Treaty of Luneville, for instance, we should have made ourselves parties to the dismemberment of the Germanic empire.<sup>1</sup> At present we could say that, if we had been unable to recover for continental Europe all its rights, we had at least been no party to its wrongs. It was true that no commercial stipulations had been introduced into the treaty, but commercial treaties involve so many subjects, and raise so many points of discussion, that it would have caused great delay to have mixed up such matters in the present treaty. The French would find it impossible to prohibit our manufactures in a time of peace as they had done in war, and, if it should come to a war of prohibitory duties we had sufficient arms for our defence in our own hands. Prophecies had been ventured on that the peace now made could not last. He could not pretend to say that this treaty, or any other which might be made at the present time, was secure; but he could not see that any additional security was to be gained by a continuance of war. Any such security must be looked

<sup>1</sup> By the Treaty of Luneville, which was concluded in February 1801, between France and the Emperor of Germany, Belgium and all the territories on the left or western bank of the Rhine were ceded to France, and the princes who were dispossessed of their dominions by this arrangement were promised indemnifications in the more central parts of the empire. At the same time the independence of the Batavian, Helvetic, and Cisalpine Republics was guaranteed.

for in the condition and disposition of France herself. That country now appeared to be returning to her old maxims of religion and politics, and a renewal of the war must be calculated to plunge her again into the revolutionary system. It was wise to spare the resources and spirit of this country as much as possible ; they had been in some degree strained by the long duration of the war, and required to be cherished by peace." He summed up his speech by affirming that "he had proved that the interests and honour of Britain had been preserved, that her allies had not been neglected, and that no degrading or dishonorable article had been introduced into the treaty," and moved his amendment, which expressed, as we have seen, a full approval of the conduct of the ministry in framing and conducting this treaty.

Neither of the great leaders, Pitt or Fox, spoke on this occasion, but two of Fox's chief supporters, Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Grey, expressed their approval of the peace, though Sheridan artfully endeavoured to make it a ground of censure of the previous ministry for rejecting the overtures of the First Consul in 1800 ; and Mr. Grey combined his sanction of the peace with a repetition of his old denunciations of the war. In the end the ministers found their views of the transactions supported by an overwhelming and most unusual majority. Only twenty members could be induced to countenance Windham's judgment, while 276 proclaimed by their votes their opinion that the honour and interests of the country had been fully consulted. And there seems no doubt that the decision thus adopted was correct. It is somewhat singular that our treaties of peace have invariably been attacked in Parliament ; that of Paris as severely as that of Utrecht, though by it we recovered Minorca and secured Canada ; that of Versailles with as much acerbity as the one which was just concluded, though in 1783 we made no sacrifices but those of claims which we had proved unable to enforce, and terminated the most disastrous as well as the most

impolitic war in which we had ever been engaged. On the whole the decision of Parliament in favour of the treaty seems to have been well founded. Though we were to give up Malta, our former history did not warrant our then looking on it as of the importance which we have since learnt to attribute to it. We had never possessed it before; we had not found our position injured by the loss of Minorca, though since 1783 that island had been restored to an active enemy; and, though the possession of Malta would have been of great importance to us if we had not had Gibraltar, as matters stood there seemed no reason to suppose that its condition in neutral hands strong enough to hold it would not be as advantageous to us as if we had the charge and burden of defending it. Again, though we restored the Cape, and several valuable conquests in the West Indies, yet it might fairly be argued that we only restored what, if peace continued, we could well dispense with, and, if war were revived, we could without difficulty recover; as in fact we did recover them. If, as the ministers did not attempt or wish to deny, we had made some sacrifices, we had made no concessions inconsistent with our honour; and, on points of but trifling importance, it was neither unmanly nor unstatesmanlike to admit some abatement of our strict pretensions for the sake of peace. It was no slight argument in favour of the present treaty that the leaders of the Opposition declined to commit themselves by a condemnation of it. Pitt, in his defence of the preliminaries, had laid it down<sup>1</sup> as the sound principle which should guide all such negotiations that, "in selecting those acquisitions which we desired to retain, it was our interest not to aim so much at keeping possession of any fresh conquest which was not of material value, as at retaining those acquisitions which from their situation or other causes were the best calculated for confirming and securing our ancient territories. The first object which must naturally present itself to every minister must be to give additional vigour to our maritime strength,

<sup>1</sup> See his Speeches, vol. III p. 267.

and security to our colonial possessions." And his unrivalled knowledge of every matter connected with trade and finance gives irresistible weight to the opinion he further expressed, that in that point of view the acquisitions which we retained in the East and West Indies were of infinitely greater value than any stronghold in the Mediterranean.

On the value of Trinidad and Ceylon Fox fully agreed with his great rival. And even the witticism of Sheridan, which is better remembered than any of the longer speeches, that it was a peace which every one was glad of, though no one was proud of, is in itself an admission that no one really saw in it anything incompatible with the dearest interests of the nation, its good faith and honour.



## CHAPTER III.

Buonaparte becomes Consul for life—His discontent with England—Lord Hawkesbury's reply to his remonstrances—Mr. Hookham Frere's description of parties in Spain—Buonaparte's encroachments—His preparations for war—He annexes Piedmont to France—Switzerland implores the aid of Britain—Lord Whitworth is sent to Paris—Negotiations with Austria and Russia—Meeting and character of the new Parliament—Eagerness of the French for the maintenance of peace—Buonaparte's intrigues in Russia—Sebastiani's mission to Egypt—Buonaparte's overtures to Louis XVIII.—Corruption of Buonaparte's family—Lord Whitworth's interview with Talleyrand—He leaves Paris.

THOSE who doubted the permanence of the tranquillity thus restored to the kingdom had not long to wait for events which promised to justify their forebodings. The ratifications had scarcely been exchanged when Buonaparte gave an indication of the extent of his personal ambition by procuring first the extension of the Consulate to himself for ten years beyond the period originally fixed, without any mention of his colleagues, whom every one felt to be mere cyphers, and before the end of the summer the further prolongation of his authority for his life. In all but name, he was now absolute sovereign of the nation; and, though there was a large party secretly indignant at these progressive encroachments, very few ventured to give open utterance to their discontent. Another prediction on which Windham and his supporters had ventured seemed to be in course of verification when our ministers learnt that a commercial treaty was being negotiated between France

and Spain, of which the chief aim was understood to be to limit and embarrass the trade of this country. It was still less a secret that the First Consul was busy in encouraging the party of faction and insurrection at Naples; while, before the end of July, Mr. Arthur Paget, our minister at Vienna, forwarded intelligence that a triple alliance had been concluded between France, Prussia, and Russia, which, even before he was able to learn its precise nature, he was convinced was full of danger to Austria. Mr. Paget himself, on making this communication, ventured on a prophecy, of which it has been reserved for our day to see the fulfilment, when he added, "The threat which has for a considerable time been held out to the Court of Vienna by France, of establishing a rivalry of strength between Austria and Prussia, seems to be at length accomplished: and, considering the relative situation of the two countries at this present epoch, there is, in my opinion, every reason to apprehend that Prussia will at no very distant period rise to be the first Power in Germany."

Austria, however, soon became aware of what had been done, and behaved with strange, discreditable, and, as she soon found out, most mischievous vacillation on the subject. She first made a treaty herself with France, by which she seemed to sanction the indemnities which were to be given to Prussia for her provinces beyond the Rhine which she had been compelled to cede to France; and then, a few weeks afterwards, when she found that Bavaria too was to obtain territories which she did not wish to see in her hands, she put her troops in motion with a precipitation which resembled pettish ill-temper more than statesmanlike resolution. She soon found herself unable to support the advance which she had thus made, and was compelled to recede, and to consent to all that was being done with an acquiescence which was too evidently the result of weakness to earn goodwill or gratitude.

We, however, abstained from interfering in a matter

which the contracting parties and the German Diet had a right to settle for themselves, and with which we had no immediate concern; and the first expression of dissatisfaction came from France. There was no single idea so firmly rooted in Buonaparte's mind as a hatred of the press in all countries;<sup>1</sup> and because some of the English newspapers and a journal conducted in London by a French emigrant, named Peltier, spoke in disrespectful, and sometimes contumelious, terms of him, he made those publications a ground of formal complaint, and directed M. Otto, who was now residing in England as the envoy of the French Government, to claim the punishment of the publishers of these papers as men who, if they were not infringing any positive law in England, were violating the law of nations by disturbing the harmony which subsisted between the two countries. Some weeks before Talleyrand, the Minister of the Interior, had complained to Mr. Merry, our representative in Paris, of our affording an asylum to the French princes, the French bishops, and other emigrants, some of whom offended the eyes of M. Otto by appearing before him "still decorated with the insignia of French orders which no longer existed," while "the political principles and conduct of them all must necessarily occasion great jealousy to the French Government." And now he enjoined M. Otto to combine with his demand for the chastisement of the journalists another for the removal of the emigrants in question from the British shores. In an elaborate note, M. Otto affirmed to Lord Hawkesbury, without producing the slightest proof in confirmation of his assertion, that these emigrants, and especially the former bishops, distributed incendiary papers through the maritime provinces of France; that others

<sup>1</sup> "Je lui ai souvent entendu dire, 'Si je lui lâche la bride je ne resterai pas trois mois au pouvoir.'" De Bourrienne, iv. 19, p. 305. Presently M. de Bourrienne imputes the attacks on England in the *Moniteur* to the First Consul himself. "Il se vengea par de violents articles qui furent insérés dans le *Moniteur*."

held dangerous meetings in the island of Jersey. And he explained that he had been instructed to demand the removal of all these emigrants, the transportation of another body to Canada, and even the dismissal of the French princes themselves, by a recommendation, which they would have no means of resisting, to retire to Warsaw, where the head of their family, the Count de Provence, was still residing. Lord Hawkesbury was equally "surprised at the circumstances under which M. Otto had thought proper to present such a note, at the style in which it was drawn up, and at the complaints contained in it." He recommended him to withdraw it, which the Frenchman did not conceive himself authorised by his instructions from Paris to do, though he consented to make some alterations in its wording which the British minister suggested. But, even when modified, Lord Hawkesbury did not consider it becoming our dignity to honour it with a formal reply, but preferred, as he wrote to his father, to "instruct Mr. Merry very fully as to the language which he was to hold in consequence of it at Paris, while he himself should adopt those measures which might be judged right because they are right, and without any reference to the note."

The letter which, in pursuance of this plan, he wrote to Mr. Merry, in order that he might communicate his sentiments to the French Government, he first submitted to the king himself, and received his approval of it in the following characteristic note :

Weymouth, August 29th, 1802.

It is impossible to pen a more weak and improper paper than the one delivered by M. Otto, or a more suitable answer than the one prepared by Lord Hawkesbury. The king never doubted either of the evil disposition or impertinence of the French Government ; but he trusts that firmness and temper will, for some time, preserve peace, which can alone be kept by this country holding a dignified language while treating with that faithless people.

GEORGE R.

And the despatch well deserved the king's praise for its conciliatory frankness combined with an unmistakeable resolution to violate no English law, and offend no English habit or feeling. Lord Hawkesbury was not ashamed to avow his anxious desire to allay the irritation which he admitted it to be natural for the French Government to feel. He unreservedly admitted that improper paragraphs respecting Buonaparte had appeared in the English journals, and that papers still more indecent and vexatious had been published by foreigners residing in England. To chastise such, the French Government might fairly have appealed to the English laws for redress, which they would actually have obtained. But they had chosen, instead, to take the law into their own hands. They had retaliated by libels on England, published in the authorised organ of the French Government, the *Moniteur*.<sup>1</sup> His Majesty felt it beneath his dignity to complain of such attacks, but it was impossible, when M. Otto had presented such a note, to forbear calling Mr. Merry's attention to the conduct of the French in this respect. Mr. Merry must be aware (and he was at liberty to communicate to the French authorities the whole of Lord Hawkesbury's note, and even to put the substance of it in writing, as a memorandum of the conversation he might hold with the French minister) that "the king neither *would* nor *could*, in consequence of any representation or menace from a foreign Power, make

<sup>1</sup> In a letter on this subject to his son, Lord Liverpool says, "It is positively asserted that Buonaparte is himself a writer of some of the paragraphs that have appeared in the *Moniteur*, which are certainly as offensive to our Government as any published in our papers can be to him. It is said also that the French Government sent over an agent here to purchase what may be called the goodwill of some of our newspapers." The first of these assertions is almost certainly true. When Buonaparte had reproached Fouché for not detecting and arresting the author of a pamphlet entitled "Cæsar, Cromwell, and Buonaparte," Fouché told De Bourrienne that the author, who was Buonaparte's own brother Lucien, had shown him the MS. full of corrections by Buonaparte himself. (De Bourrienne) iv. 13, p. 219.

any concession which could be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, justly dear to every British subject. The British constitution admits of no previous restraints upon publications of this description. But we had courts of law, wholly *independent of the Executive Government*, capable of taking cognizance of all improper publications; bound to inflict punishment on delinquents; and which, in fact, often have punished libels defamatory of foreign governments. Our own Government has no other protection than that of these same laws; and, while it is willing to give foreign governments every possible protection, it can neither consent to new-model our laws or to change our constitution to gratify the wishes of any foreign Power. With respect to the Alien Act, which we were asked to put in force to expel those foreigners who were alleged to be the authors of these offensive publications, that law had only been enacted to enable the king to prevent the residence here of foreigners whose numbers or principles were calculated to endanger the internal peace of his dominions. It would be an abuse of it to exert it in the case of such individuals as those of whom M. Otto complained, and who, if they had done wrong, were amenable to other laws.

“The demand for the removal of the French princes and other emigrants was still more inadmissible. The French had urged that we had formerly demanded the removal of the Pretender from France. There was a manifest difference between the cases. When James II. first fled from England, he retired to France; and we never made the slightest demand for the dismissal of him or any of his family or adherents from St. Germain’s, where, in fact, he lived and died. But when, after his death, Louis XIV., in direct violation of former treaties, formally acknowledged his son as King of England, we could no longer be indifferent to such an insult, and, in the Peace of Utrecht, we made it one of the conditions of the treaty that the Pretender himself should not be allowed to reside

in France. But we never extended the demand to any members of his family or any of his adherents, though they were notoriously busy in exciting actual rebellion in England. We never required the removal even of the Duke of Berwick, who, from his talents and principles, was the most dangerous man in the world to the interests of the country and the Protestant succession. In the present instance the demand for the removal of the French princes and their partisans rested on no condition of any treaty; indeed, the 20th article of the recent treaty especially limited the persons whom either Government might claim to have surrendered to them, to criminals accused on fair evidence of murder, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy. If the bishops, of whom M. Otto complained, could be proved to have attempted to induce the French people to disturb their existing Government, or resist the new Church establishment, then his Majesty would think himself justified in removing them from the country (as, in fact, he was preparing to remove Georges and some of his followers). But then proof must first be given that they are making such attempts."

Finally, Lord Hawkesbury thought it important to observe that the tone of M. Otto's note was "far from conciliatory; and that the practice of presenting such notes could not fail to have the effect of indisposing the two nations to each other, instead of consolidating and strengthening the peace which was now happily established. It was the duty of a wise Government to endeavour to allay feelings of irritation, rather than to provoke them. The king was sincerely disposed to adopt every measure for the preservation of peace which was consistent with the honour and independence of the country, and with the security of its laws and constitution. But the French Government must have formed a most erroneous judgment of the disposition of the British nation and of the character of its Government, if it expected that any representative of a foreign Power would ever induce



them to consent to a violation of those rights on which the liberties of the people of this country are founded."

And the Ministry did not limit its conciliatory disposition to a courteous despatch; but when Peltier, the French writer of whom Otto had chiefly complained, proceeded to publish articles which were not only defamatory of the person and character of the First Consul, but were even capable of being construed as incitements to assassination, our Government successfully instituted a prosecution against him, without however pacifying Buonaparte himself, or inducing him to check the attacks which the *Moniteur* continued to make on everything connected with England. The First Consul even took upon himself to issue an order to M. Lavalette, the French Postmaster-General, to disregard the regulations which, by mutual agreement, had governed the communications between the two countries since the re-establishment of peace, and to prevent the conveyance of passengers by the mail-packets, solely, as M. Lavalette confessed to Mr. Merry, in order to retaliate on us in another way the vexation which he felt at the comments made on his conduct by the English press; and the entrance of English newspapers and pamphlets into France he absolutely prohibited.

The negotiation of the commercial treaty with Spain, for which he was anxious, was interrupted for a time by the refusal of King Charles to proceed with it till the French Government should have discharged the debts owing to some Spaniards whose property in France had been recently sequestered under circumstances of admitted illegality. But this refusal, which, in the case of a more consistent and independent Government, would have been dictated by a proper sense of what was due to itself and to its subjects, was, in the case of Spain, a mere burst of impotent petulance. The Court and Government of Spain were at this time in a most miserable condition; and the character of the principal personages, the king, the queen, and Godoy, the Prince of Peace, had so great an influence on

the subsequent history of the whole Continent, that no apology seems needed for inserting a letter from a very penetrating observer, Mr. Hookham Frere, who was at this time resident at Madrid as our ambassador, and who thus describes them to the Secretary of State for the guidance of our Government :

MY LORD,

Valencia, December 22d, 1802.

I take the advantage of this form of letter to forward to your Lordship such notions respecting the state and character of this Court as could not with propriety be entrusted to a public despatch, and I must entreat your Lordship to bestow the same care upon its security, or to destroy it as soon as it has served the purpose of information for which it was intended. I am the more anxious upon this point from knowing that, wherever scandalous anecdotes are concerned, even though they should involve the most important secrets, they do somehow find their way into public notoriety in a manner almost unaccountable, and I am well aware that if any such anecdotes should become current in London they will infallibly be referred to me as their source, and will be attended with the worst consequences to his Majesty's service.

The character of his Catholic Majesty had been for a long time misunderstood ; it had been imagined that he possessed a great deal of latent energy. The freedom of his carriage, the impetuosity of all his movements, the abruptness of his gestures and tones of voice, all favoured this idea ; and it was imagined that the passiveness which he had shown in many instances proceeded rather from want of reflection and understanding than from want of vigour and spirit, and that, whenever a case should arise in which his honour and interests should be decidedly and evidently implicated, he would at last exhibit that firmness the want of which had been so long regretted. These occasions have, however, presented themselves too often to afford any hope from their recurrence, and the character of this sovereign must, it is imagined, be classed with that of other princes of his house, and with that of the unfortunate Louis XVI. in particular, in whom the same tone and manner were visible without being attended by those mental energies which they usually indicate

It is, besides, very generally apprehended that the king has, by the suggestions of his consort, become a convert to a perfect system of political epicurism, and that they have formed together a sort of shocking calculation that the present system, carefully managed, may be made to last their time, and that the miseries which are to result from it must be the concern of their successor.

The conduct of the queen had been for a long time notorious to every individual in the country except the king, and it was imagined that whenever the discovery was made his resentment would be terrible and fatal. It is, however, now past a doubt that the king is no longer deceived, information having been given him to which he could not shut his eyes. I have it even from good authority, and from more than one quarter, that the Prince of Peace had the audacity, some time ago, to conceive the project of removing the queen into confinement upon this accusation; that he reproached her, in the presence of the king, with the irregularity of her conduct; and concluded by saying that not as a punishment for what was to be regarded as a natural infirmity, but for the avoidance of scandal, and for the removal of bad example, she ought to be sent away from the Court. He then appealed to the Archbishop of Toledo and Seville, his brother-in-law, with whom the scene had been concocted; but, the archbishop's courage failing him, he concluded in a milder sense, and the Prince of Peace was left in a violent altercation with the queen at the one end of the room, while the king, looking on, told the archbishop to see how they quarrelled.

It is supposed to be upon this principle that the present gallant has not been suffered to attend the Court in its journey.

The situation of the Prince of Peace with respect to the king is singular. I have been told, and I am disposed to believe, that the king *fears him*. The Prince of Peace has certainly been known to make use of expressions which looked that way. Immediately after the campaign in Portugal, the Prince of Peace upon some occasion presented himself under the windows of the palace with a train of one hundred and fifty general officers and others. The queen was overheard to say to the king, "This is too much!" and yet they both came

forward to the balcony and returned his salute, and received him with marked expressions of attention. General Morla (now Governor of Cadiz), who attended the Prince of Peace, did not take off his hat, though the prince told him to do so, and reminded him that he was standing in the presence of the king. Yet this insolence passed unnoticed.

The queen has long dreaded him ; but, whether from the remains of old attachment, or from the extreme ascendancy he has acquired over her, she certainly overturned the scheme which in Urquiza's Ministry had been prepared for his destruction. It is a singular fact, and perfectly agrees with what I have before mentioned, that, notwithstanding his seeming omnipotency, he has never been able to unite in his person the administration of the War Department and the command of the army. The queen, who was alarmed at this union of powers, prevailed upon the king to resist it ; the prince was baffled, and the office has been held for this year and a half *in commendam* by the Minister of Justice, who was bred a lawyer, and is no more acquainted with military affairs than other lawyers usually are.

He is certainly at this moment indisposed towards France, though he entertains at the same time an excessive distrust of the British Government, the effect of the former calumnies of the French. I believe I mentioned to your Lordship once that he was seriously persuaded that the British Government had employed persons to poison or assassinate him. This notion, which appears so absurd in England, is not so here, owing, as I find, to the extreme frequency of the former crime.

This distrust is so powerful, that though I have reason to believe that he proposes to send a secret mission to England, I am in doubt whether I should venture to propose such a step for him for fear of exciting some suspicion of collusion between me and the person whom he might propose to employ. Suspicion and distrust are, as I am informed, the characteristic qualities of his nature, which betray themselves in the management of his domestic concerns ; and in other matters of trifling import this quality (as is naturally to be expected from his situation) is daily gaining ground. His vanity, which was one of the chief instruments which the French formerly made use of, by exciting

his jealousy of the reputation of the British minister, has now taken an opposite direction, and has made him equally impatient of the celebrity of Bonaparte. There is, too, I believe, a good deal in the physical antipathy which must exist between two creatures of such opposite natures : the one gross, sensual, and illiterate, eating, drinking, digesting, and in the full enjoyment of animal life ; the other valetudinary in constitution, romantic and pedantic, and removed at an equal distance on the other side of the line of propriety and good taste.

It is certain that he hates Bonaparte as much for the means by which he has risen, as the other must despise him for those by which he has done so. I was so persuaded of this that I ventured to touch upon the point in the short conversation which we had together, when he questioned me as to my opinion on the continuance of peace. I answered, "*Que voulez-vous ? Qui peut répondre des volontés d'un homme, qui ne boit ni ne mange, qui est agité par un malaise physique, et qui ne peut rester en repos pour nous après les sacrifices que nous avons fait pour obtenir la paix ? Vous pouvez être sûr que nous serions bien fâchés de les avoir fait gratuitement.*"

The way in which he received this convinced me that I was right. Supposing this jealousy and antipathy to have their full effect, and the jealousy and distrust on the other side to be got over, the Prince of Peace would still have to combat the intrigues and influence of the queen, who would dread the idea of seeing him invested with such an authority as would be necessary for carrying into execution any measure of vigour or effect, from the well-grounded apprehension that the exercise of this authority would shortly be directed against herself. As far as I can venture to judge, this is the obstacle the most likely to prove fatal to any project for the emancipation of Spain. In addition to this must be taken into consideration the levity of the Prince of Peace's character, and the possibility that at any time, in a moment of vanity or pique, he might suffer the most important secret to escape him ; which he would no sooner have done than he would immediately set about to crush and destroy his accomplices, in order to efface the suspicions which his own imprudence had excited.

I ought not to omit to mention to your Lordship, that after

speaking with some feeling of the manner in which Azara had been treated, he expressed to me his surprise that our ambassador at Paris should have put up with some slights which he understood had been passed upon him. As the subject was one upon which I had no information, I did not follow it; but I was struck with the circumstance of his expressing an anxiety for the support of British dignity.

I shall endeavour to point out to him the propriety of sending a secret and confidential mission to Vienna, where the minister is a mere sensualist and completely null. This step is no less desirable than the mission to England, as it is evident that, if Spain were to attempt to mutiny, even with the utmost assistance of Great Britain, she would only draw down ruin upon herself, as the Government would not have the courage to bear up against the first reverses which they must naturally expect, nor the foresight to perceive that Spain, with the national spirit which prevails in the country, with the antipathy to France, the military passion of the people, and its various local advantages, is, in fact, a country which can never be conquered, except by the weakness or connivance of its Government. They would probably, at the end of the first campaign, conclude a peace which would leave the country a conquest in the hands of France. In the present moment the suspicion of such an intention would be attended with the most fatal consequences. We must bear in mind that an attempt to rescue Spain from her present situation is, in fact, a conspiracy against the established authority of France, and that its discovery would be attended with the same effects as the discovery of any other conspiracy; namely, the ruin of every individual concerned in it. It must therefore (if ever such a scheme can be set on foot) be treated in the same manner; nothing, or at least as little as possible, must be committed to writing, and everything must be conducted by the verbal communication of confidential persons.

I take this opportunity to mention to your Lordship that the suspicion which was excited by a passage of Azara's letter, a copy of which I transmitted from Lisbon near two years ago, is much strengthened by what I have found to be the impression here; namely, that our secrets have been betrayed. An emigrant here, a relation of Portalis's, was constantly in possession of



good information, which he was understood, and which, I believe, with the usual vanity of his nation, he professed to derive through his relation with that source.

I will now proceed to give your Lordship some account of the remaining principal personages. The Prince of Asturias is about eighteen years old, lively, affable, unembarrassed, and pleasing in his manners, in countenance and complexion resembling his mother. His political sentiments have not been declared sufficiently to be spoken of with certainty, but he is not known to have given any tokens of predilection for the French; and this alone, considering the circumstances of the times, may be considered as a favourable symptom. He usually speaks slightly of the Prince of Peace, sometimes calling him the "*Garde de Corps*," and sometimes the "*Senhorito*," which is about equivalent to "*Joli Cœur*" in French, or "pretty young gentleman" in English. His innocence and simplicity on certain points were so great as to have produced a very ludicrous embarrassment on the occasion of his marriage. This however will, in all probability, be soon effectually removed, as some of his attendants are occupied in plying him with all sorts of pestilent books upon this principle, which I give in their own words: "*Puisque enfin nous devons être gouvernés par les femmes, il faut d'abord lui gâter le cœur.*" The princess his wife is a little fair figure, seemingly of a delicate constitution, nearly handsome, much resembling the pictures of her mother, said to be very observant, and sometimes satirical.

I will now conclude, entreating your Lordship to believe that I am, with great truth and respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble Servant,

H. FRERE.

With such rulers there could be no long interruption of the influence exercised over Spain by a neighbour of so unyielding a will as the First Consul. In his eyes his allies ceased to be friends the moment that they were unwilling to be slaves; and, though the whole course of the negotiations of the preceding winter had shown him that any new encroachments on his part would excite a feeling of alarm which must endanger the continuance of peace,



yet the ratifications were hardly exchanged before he began to show that his appetite for a further extension of his authority and for additional acquisitions of territory was alike unsatiated and unchecked. Every month brought forth fresh instances of his disregard for the spirit, and often for the letter, of the recent treaty. He began by exacting from the Sultan permission for French merchantships to navigate the Black Sea on the same footing as ships "of the most favoured nation." He even pressed for such a liberty being allowed to French ships of war, though armed ships of every other country were excluded, and was with difficulty induced to recede from that pretension. And, at the very same moment that he was demanding these favours from the Porte, there was reason to believe that he was endeavouring to tempt others to co-operate with him in the dismemberment of the Turkish empire,<sup>1</sup> that he might obtain a port in the Mediterranean nearer to Egypt than Malta, in case he failed to recover his influence over that island.

Mr. Merry next reported that he was equipping a powerful fleet in Toulon. The preparation of a naval force could hardly be meant to menace any other Power but ourselves; and before the end of the summer fresh extensions of his power along the Italian coast supplied additional evidence what the object of that armament really was. In August, as has been already mentioned, he procured the prolongation of his consular authority for his life; and though, as Mr. Merry reported, the discontent which the measure really produced in France was "smothered by fear," it was

<sup>1</sup> On the 16th of June Mr. Merry wrote to Lord Hawkesbury that he had additional reason to believe the reports of a design having been formed by the French Government for the dismemberment of Turkey, and of such a plan having made a part of the discussions in which the Russian minister had been so closely engaged. But M. de Marcoff had lately received an answer on the subject by which the Emperor of Russia appears to have disapproved the plan, and to have expressed a desire that the integrity of the Turkish empire should be maintained. According to the plan proposed, France was to have had the Morea.

impossible for other countries to fail to see in such a measure increased means of bending France to his absolute will, and so making himself more formidable to his neighbours. Accordingly the next month witnessed the commencement of a series of encroachments which were manifestly incompatible with the preservation of peace, being in fact so many steps designed to strengthen him for the renewal of the war on which he was bent. In the beginning of September he issued a decree annexing Piedmont to France, on the shameless plea that no article in the treaties of Luneville or Amiens had forbidden him to do so; and he instantly began to secure his hold over his new province by cutting new roads across the Alps. A week or two later he seized on Parma and Piacenza, and took possession also of Elba, that little island which afterwards became so conspicuous a monument of his fall. The same month he dissolved the existing constitution of the Batavian Republic by open force of arms, not because its Legislature, which was indeed of his own creation, was not sufficiently obsequious to his will, but merely that it might be modelled for the future more exactly on the plan of the French Republic. And in the first days of October he despatched his favourite aide-de-camp, General Rapp, to Lausanne, to announce to the rulers of the Helvetic Republic that their Government also was dissolved, and that the First Consul took upon himself to settle the differences which existed between the different countries by his own "efficacious mediation." The Swiss implored the protection and assistance of Great Britain. But their country was so placed that, had we been ever so much inclined to aid them with troops, it would have been impossible to do so. We could only remonstrate with the French Government for its tyrannical interference with the constitution of a free country, and promise the Swiss themselves pecuniary succour in case they should resolve on making an armed resistance, which they soon found to be impracticable. Buonaparte sent Ney, one of the greatest

of his generals, to overrun and subdue the country, and at the beginning of the following year promulgated a new constitution, which in fact made him master of Switzerland.

It was obvious that these manifold encroachments of the First Consul, these extensions of the power of France in every direction, had made so great a change in the state of Europe since the signature of the Treaty of Amiens as entirely nullified our obligation to complete the cessions to which we had engaged ourselves. To give additional force to the representations which we decided on making on the subject, we replaced Mr. Merry by an ambassador of higher rank, Lord Whitworth; and a despatch which Lord Hawkesbury addressed to him on his appointment sets in the clearest possible light the line of policy on which the Cabinet had resolved, and the grounds by which our resolution to retain those conquests which, under a different state of affairs, we had been willing to restore, was abundantly justified.

*Most secret and confidential.*

TO LORD WHITWORTH.

MY LORD,

November 14th.

I take the first opportunity of communicating to your Excellency, for the regulation of your conduct, the instructions which his Majesty is pleased to give you on such points as are at present subjects of difference between his Majesty and the French Government, and to desire that you will endeavour to conform yourself to them in all your conversations with the French ministers.

You will lose no proper opportunity of expressing his Majesty's earnest solicitude for the preservation of the peace which subsists between the two countries; his disposition to do everything in his power for that purpose which is consistent with the honour of his crown and the interests of his dominions, and his regret at any circumstances which may have arisen to interrupt that harmony and good understanding which is so important to the welfare and happiness of both countries. You will, however, state most distinctly his Majesty's determination

never to forego his right of interfering in the affairs of the Continent on every occasion in which the interests of his own dominions, or those of Europe in general, may appear to him to require it. This right his Majesty possesses in common with every other independent Power; it rests upon general principles, and does not require the confirmation of any particular treaty. It is nevertheless important that you should observe that the circumstances which led to the last peace, and the principles upon which the negotiation was conducted, would give his Majesty a special right to interpose in any case which might lead to the extension of the power or influence of France. In the communications which took place between the two Governments previous to the signature of the preliminary articles, his Majesty proposed, as the basis of negotiation, that, if the French Government would not relinquish the continental acquisitions which they had obtained from other Powers in the course of war, his Majesty would claim the right of keeping a part of his conquests as a compensation for the important acquisitions of territory made by France upon the Continent. This principle was formally recognised by the French Government in an official note in the following words: "*Cependant on reconnoit que les grandes événemens survenus en Europe et les changemens arrivés dans les territoires des grands États du Continent peuvent autoriser une partie des demandes du Gouvernement Britannique.*" The terms of the treaty of peace were negotiated in conformity to this basis; and it appears therefore clear that the then existing state of possession and of engagements as respects the Continent were the foundations of the peace itself, and that his Majesty has therefore an undoubted right to interpose, in consequence of the treaty, in every case in which the state of possession may appear to him to have undergone any material alteration, or in which the engagements which were then subsisting have been violated to the prejudice of his Majesty or of the other Powers of Europe. You will proceed to observe that the annexation of Piedmont to France since the conclusion of the definitive treaty makes a most material difference in the state of the fixed and permanent possessions of France. That the renunciation of the Duchy of Parma in favour of France, a circumstance which was con-

cealed at the time of negotiating the peace, and which is become of the greatest importance from its furnishing an additional instance of that system of *secret cession* which is totally inconsistent with any system of security for Europe, makes a most essential difference likewise in the relative circumstances of the two countries. That at the time of concluding the peace the French Government were bound by the most sacred engagements to respect the independence of the Helvetic and Batavian Republics, and to allow the people of those countries to choose whatever form of government they might think proper. That the violation of this right in the Swiss people, and the invasions of their territory, notwithstanding the representation made in their favour by his Majesty, makes a most material alteration in the state of engagements since the conclusion of the definitive treaty, and adds most considerably to the influence and the power of France, to the prejudice of a state which was then acknowledged as independent. That the conduct of the French Government to the Batavian Republic was not less objectionable; that the independence of this republic was acknowledged both by the Treaty of Luneville and by the Treaty of the Hague; the French Government were permitted to keep garrisons in that country only till the time of a general peace. That by a convention signed in August 1801, the French troops were to remain there till the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace between Great Britain and France. That the French troops have not to this period evacuated the country, and that the First Consul is represented lately to have declared, "That in the event of any differences among the people of that country on the subject of their internal government, he would march with his whole army to suppress them." That this is an obvious violation of the independence of the Batavian Republic, and that his Majesty has a peculiar right to interpose on the present occasion, as he consented to make numerous and most important restitutions to the Batavian Government in the treaty of peace, on the consideration of that Government being independent and not being subject to any foreign control.

It is unnecessary for me to recommend to your Excellency to make these representations with moderation and temper. You

will attend very particularly to any explanations which may be given you respecting them, and you will engage to report such explanations to his Majesty's Government.

You will avoid, with peculiar caution, committing his Majesty's Government as to what may be their ultimate determination upon all or any of these points ; viz. whether under any circumstances an unsatisfactory explanation respecting them might lead to war on the part of his Majesty ; whether it might induce his Majesty to claim some additional acquisition to counterbalance the acquisitions of France, or whether it might be thought most prudent for the present to acquiesce. His Majesty's conduct in this respect must be determined by a variety of considerations, and particularly by the information which he may receive of the sentiments and intentions of the other European Powers.

It is natural to suppose that the French ministers will take an early opportunity of bringing forward, at least in conversation, any grievance which they may choose to allege against his Majesty's Government ; and I have no doubt the most prominent will be the complaints which they have so often advanced already respecting the liberty of the press in this country, and the conduct of the French emigrants who are resident here. Upon these subjects it is unnecessary for me to do more than to refer you to my despatch to Mr. Merry (No. 20), and to desire that you would strictly conform yourself to the instructions therein contained. In the event, however, of any conversation upon this subject, it is material that you should remark on the paragraphs which have lately appeared in the *Moniteur*, calumniating his Majesty's Government, and that you should dwell particularly on the distinction existing between paragraphs of this nature appearing in a paper avowedly official and the paragraphs in our English publications, over which the Government of this country have no previous control, and which have been repeatedly and explicitly disavowed by his Majesty's Government.

If the French Government should enter into any conversation with you on the subject of the Island of Malta, it is of great importance that you should avoid committing his Majesty as to what may be eventually his intentions with respect to that



island. It is evident that the arrangements stipulated in the twentieth article of the definitive treaty cannot as yet be carried into effect. That neither the Governments of St. Petersburg or of Berlin have given any decisive answer to the application that has been made to them to become guarantying Powers of the arrangement.

That according to the article the Grand Master must be chosen before there can be any person properly authorised to receive possession of the island. That Prince Ruspoli has declined the situation of Grand Master, and that it will be necessary, therefore, for the Pope to make some other selection.

I recommend to you, however, to avoid saying anything which may engage his Majesty to restore the island, even if these arrangements should be completed according to the true intent and spirit of the tenth article of the Treaty of Amiens. His Majesty would certainly be justified in claiming the possession of Malta as some counterpoise to the acquisitions of France since the conclusion of the definitive treaty; but it is not necessary to decide in the present moment whether his Majesty will be desirous to avail himself of his pretensions in this respect. It would be better, therefore, that you should not bring the subject of Malta forward at present, unless it should be first mentioned by the French ministers. You will then conform yourself to the instructions above stated, and you will be very particular in representing to me everything which may pass upon this important subject.

I shall not fail to inform your Excellency from time to time of the substance of the conversations which may take place between General Andréossi and myself, as it is of the utmost importance that your language to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs should correspond as much as possible with mine to the French Ambassador.

Yours truly,

HAWKESBURY.

Lord Hawkesbury, at the same time, entered into full explanations with the Courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, which were not without influence in the subsequent course of events. But he doubted whether, even if those Governments were to give the most open sanction and support



to our views, Buonaparte would be induced to recede in the least from the path of aggressive ambition on which he had entered. There was, as he wrote to his father, perhaps some little encouragement to be derived from the character of the new French ambassador, General Andréossi, who succeeded M. Otto when Lord Whitworth superseded Mr. Merry; and whom Otto represented as a man "of very moderate principles, and very strongly inclined to the preservation of peace." Otto assured Lord Hawkesbury that the General "would pay very little attention to Talleyrand, and that he had obtained the privilege of corresponding directly with the First Consul,"<sup>1</sup> while Lord Hawkesbury "had also reason to know that Andréossi had expressed his disapprobation as to what had been done in Switzerland, and had even said that Buonaparte was aware that he had gone too far."

The Parliament which met on the 16th of November was a new one, and a fortnight afterwards Lord Hawkesbury began to entertain rather more sanguine hopes of being able to preserve peace; while, at the same time, he thought the House of Commons inclined to judge

<sup>1</sup> Though of course this was not known to the English Cabinet, the selection of General Andréossi had been the act of Buonaparte himself, and was not at all approved by Talleyrand. De Bourrienne relates an amusing scene between the First Consul and the minister in connexion with the appointment. "Le soir même M. de Talleyrand vint travailler avec lui; nous étions à la Malmaison. Il fut question de la nomination d'un ambassadeur en Angleterre: le Premier Consul nomma plusieurs personnes, et dit ensuite, 'J'ai envie de nommer Andréossi.' M. de Talleyrand, qui n'était pas bien disposé pour ce choix, lui répondit d'un air spirituel et malin: 'Vous voulez nommer André aussi! Quel est donc cet André?' 'Je ne vous parle pas d'un André, je vous parle d'Andréossi; est-ce que vous ne le connaissez pas? Pardieu, Andréossi, général d'artillerie.' 'Andréossi! ah, oui, oui, c'est vrai, Andréossi. Je n'y pensais pas; je cherchais dans la diplomatie, et je ne l'y trouvais pas. C'est vrai; oui, oui, c'est vrai, il est dans l'artillerie.' Le Premier Consul parla alors du Général Andréossi de manière à faire voir à M. de Talleyrand qu'il désignait ce général d'artillerie pour l'ambassade à Londres." (De Bourrienne, iv. 22, p. 343.)

favorably of and to support the Ministry, whatever might happen. He writes to his father:—

The House was rather flat, but this I have observed is generally the case with a new Parliament; a great proportion of the members who attend being new members, who are unacquainted with the ways of the House, and who cannot be expected to give much encouragement to any party. There is certainly much room for political intrigue, as there are various parties in the House, and each of them inclined to pursue a system of its own. I understand, however, from Mr. Addington, that his assurances of support from country gentlemen are as satisfactory as he could possibly expect.

The conduct of Government with respect to France is certainly approved of in general, both in and out of Parliament. The prevailing sentiment appears to be considerable irritation with respect to the conduct of France, but a strong desire to avoid war if possible. Our next debate will probably take place on the army estimates. It is intended to vote very large establishments: 35,000 men will be proposed for Great Britain, 25,000 for Ireland; 5,000 for Jamaica, 10,000 for the Leeward Islands, 8,000 for Gibraltar and Malta, 7,000 for North America and Canada, and 14,000 for the East Indies. Sanguine hopes are entertained that, from the flourishing state of the revenue, a force to this extent may be kept up without the necessity of imposing any new taxes, or at least without imposing any that can be material. I do not hear when Mr. Pitt is likely to come up. . . .

The intelligence from St. Domingo in the *Moniteur* is certainly far short of the truth. Andréossi acknowledged to me that they had lost fourteen generals. Lord Nelson told me yesterday that he had had a private letter from Admiral Duckworth, who is on the Jamaica station, and who says that, with every effort of perseverance on the part of the French Government, it would require fifty years at least to restore the island to anything like its former state of prosperity. And, for this and other reasons, I am inclined to think that the French Government will not be disposed to seek a quarrel with us. But the extraordinary, and in some respects extravagant, cha-

racter of Buonaparte makes all reasoning on this subject more than usually doubtful. The ministers in foreign courts are all aware of this. Andréossi said to me the other day, "Dans tout ce qu'on fait il y a beaucoup qui tient au personnel."

Lord Hawkesbury and his chief did not miscalculate as to the inclination of the House to support the Ministry. Fox indeed soon withdrew the aid which he had given it in the debate on the peace, and expressed a decided opposition to the increase in the war estimates: but he was followed by so few, even Sheridan resolutely differing from the views which he advanced, that he did not venture to divide against it, and the general feeling seemed evidently to be that expressed by the old proverb, "Si vis pacem para bellum," that to show a readiness for war was the most likely mode to avoid being dragged into one. And except that the Ministry, and especially Lord Hawkesbury himself, began to feel uneasiness about Pitt's continuance of support,<sup>1</sup> the state of affairs at home looked as promising as they could desire. The year 1803 opened

<sup>1</sup> As early as January 9th, 1803, Lord Hawkesbury writes to his father, that "though Pitt professed himself friendly to Government, and determined to continue his support of them, he certainly passes a great part of his time with those who are hostile in every way to the present Administration" (he means especially his own particular friend Canning), "and who have succeeded in impressing him with the idea that it is not for his credit to be supposed to be in the confidence of Government and a party to their measures when he has no share of either power or responsibility. I understand, however" (the letter continues), "that he is decidedly adverse to the acceptance of office. What all this will produce it is difficult to say. I confess I think it scarcely possible that under any *probable* circumstances he is likely to be induced to oppose Government, but it is possible he may be persuaded to start doubts and take distinctions which would have the effect of embarrassing Government, and of shaking the confidence of the public in them." It is remarkable that in April of this year Mr. Addington told the Speaker "that in January intimation came to him on the part of Mr. Pitt that Mr. Pitt was less disinclined to return to power, and that Mr. Addington had told Steele, Perceval, and others of Mr. Pitt's friends that he (Mr. Addington) would be no obstacle to so desirable an end." (Diary of Lord Colchester, i. 413.)

peacefully, and Lord Whitworth's account of the First Consul's reception of the diplomatic body on New Year's day reads like a narrative of similar assemblies of more recent date. "The subject of his general conversation turned chiefly on philanthropy. He congratulated himself, as if he had in part contributed to it, on the improved state of civilization and social happiness, not only in France, but throughout Europe; but lamented that every Government should have adopted more or less the pernicious system of maintaining such enormous standing armies, adding that it was a pity they would not all agree to reduce them at least two-thirds. I observed that one good example would have more effect than the best reasoning." Lord Whitworth became daily more and more convinced that the great body of the French people, and especially of the Parisians, were most strongly averse to a renewal of the war. The hotel which had been taken for him he found in need of considerable repairs, which he was now executing; and the citizens watched the works with the greatest interest, judging of his expectation of the probabilities of a continued peace by the willingness which he might show to incur expense, which, if his embassy should be brought to an early termination by hostilities, would be wasted. Much, he thought, depended on our coming to a good understanding with Russia, which had a peculiar interest in the question of Malta, from the proposal which had been made to the Czar, both by France and England, to place that island under his especial protection. And a naval officer of high reputation, Sir J. B. Warren, was sent to St. Petersburg to endeavour to stir the Government of that country to an early declaration of its resolution. But to obtain a positive answer of any kind from the Russian Ministry at that time was impossible. They feared France while they hated it. A letter from M. Sablonkoff, a Russian noble then residing at Paris, to the Count Alexander Woronzow, the Russian Chancellor, whose confidence he

enjoyed, which fell into the hands of our Government, showed them that this feeling predominated over every other;<sup>1</sup> and Buonaparte spared no pains, by personal caresses of and a show of confidence in the Russian diplomatists and nobles in Paris, to gain them over to his secret views, which were already as hostile to England, and as ambitious and grasping, as when, four years later, he was able to compel Alexander's adhesion to them at Tilsit.

With this knowledge Lord Hawkesbury had no difficulty in inducing his colleagues to delay the evacuation of Malta; and he received the King's approval in a curious letter, which shows that, with all his straightforward honesty and frankness, George III. was not a stranger to the diplomatic arts of evasion and procrastination:

January 28th, 1803.

The King has read the proposed note to be delivered by Sir John Warren to the Chancellor, Count Woronzow, in answer to the one transmitted by him on the subject of Malta. The great object of the answer should be to protract the evacuation as long as possible, from the manifest views France nourishes

<sup>1</sup> The date was February 9, 1803, and M. Sablonkoff's language seems to have been only a reflection of Woronzow's language to him. He says: "Ce que vous m'avez dit de la France n'est que trop vrai. Ce pays, quoique dans la misère, est cependant bien à craindre. Un peuple léger et vicieux, dirigé par une bande de magistrats cupides et lâches, qu'un ambitieux fortuné maîtrise, est une hydre dont toutes les têtes sont également dangereuses. Je le répète, la France est un monstre qu'on ne saurait assez redouter." Further on the letter says, "Le général Hitroff a eu une présentation privée au Premier Consul. Il lui a remis une lettre de l'Empereur. Avec une lettre comme celle-là on est sur d'être bien reçu. Je donnerai des ordres pour que tout vous soit ouvert et montré. Il a tenu Hitroff pendant plus d'une heure. Il lui a, entr'autres choses, parlé de *son indignation contre la conduite infâme des Anglais* pendant leur coalition avec les Russes, et a fini le dialogue par dire que la France et la Russie étaient trop éloignées pour se faire la guerre. Et qu'elles sont faites pour être amies. 'Je réponds qu'à nous deux nous donnerons la loi à l'Europe entière, au globe entier.' Hitroff m'a paru enchanté de son esprit, mais étonné de son despotisme: toujours *je, moi, partout mon.*"

of fresh expeditions to the East. The King trusts this note will open a tedious negotiation, which is certainly the line at present most suitable to the tranquillity of the globe. It is supposed that Lord Hawkesbury will give at a proper time notice to Count Simon Woronzow<sup>1</sup> of the step which has been taken, as his good or bad disposition towards the measure will at the present moment have great weight at his Court ; and, though it may be feared that no great activity can be expected from the Court of Russia, it is desirable to get her as much interested in the question, and as closely connected with this country, as apparent cordiality from hence can effect.

GEORGE R.

January did not pass without Buonaparte affording fresh indications of how little sincerity there was in his professions of a desire to maintain peace, and fresh specimens of his discourteous arrogance towards every other nation. In the autumn he had sent M. Sebastiani, a general whose abilities were not confined to his own profession, to Egypt, nominally to re-establish the French commerce with that country on the footing on which it had stood before the war, but really to efface that impression of our superior power which had been produced by the inglorious end of his own expedition to that country, and to tamper with the Pachas and other officers of the Porte. And he now published in the *Moniteur* a report which the general had just addressed to him, in the highest degree insulting and injurious to England ; accusing the English Government and diplomatists of intriguing against those Turkish officials who were friendly to France, and the English Commander-in-chief, General Stuart, of instigating his own assassination ; giving a most precise account of our force in that country, but disparaging its condition and management in every particular, affirming that “ a great misunderstanding existed between General Stuart and the

<sup>1</sup> The brother of the Chancellor, and at this time the Russian ambassador in London.

Pacha," and concluding with an assertion that "6,000 French would at present be enough to conquer Egypt."

Since it was evident that the attempt on Egypt thus suggested, and, as the publication of the report showed, not disapproved of, would be greatly facilitated by our removal from Malta, it of course made us the more resolute not to relinquish our hold on that important island while matters remained in such a state of uncertainty; and that determination was strengthened by every fresh instance of anxiety displayed on the subject by the First Consul. At the same time Buonaparte was taking a singular step with a view to consolidate his own power, or rather to force the way to his attainment of the higher rank which he coveted, by seeking to bribe the Count de L'Isle, as the next brother of the last king was now styled, into a resignation of his rights as legitimate heir to the French throne, by the offer of a princely establishment in some other country,<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> The proposal and the reply made by the French prince are recorded by Alison, xxxv. § 84. But that author, who mistakes the place of Louis's abode at the time, does not seem to have been aware that the King of Prussia pressed its acceptance on Louis, was willing to guarantee the performance of the conditions, and expected to be able to prevail on the Czar to add his guarantee also. In spite of the desire of Louis to keep the transaction secret, it soon became known to Lord Hawkesbury, who received copies of the correspondence; and the following letter of Louis to his brother (afterwards Charles X.) on the subject will not be without interest:—

"A Varsovie, ce 2 Mars, 1803.

"Voici, mon cher frère, un incident auquel j'imagine que vous ne vous attendiez guères. B. P. gâté d'un côté par la fortune, sentant de l'autre combien peu solide est une usurpation opposée à d'impréscriptibles droits, a osé croire qu'il pourrait nous déterminer à vendre les nôtres. Le Roi de Prusse, auquel il s'est ouvert sur ses projets, n'a pu se dispenser de me transmettre cette ouverture. Ici pour m'épargner des détails je laisse parler les pièces" (a copy of the proposal and of the reply made in writing by Louis to M. le Président de Meyer, who had been sent from Berlin with the proposal, and had just opened himself on the subject to the Abbé Edgeworth).

"Je n'essayerai pas de vous peindre les divers sentimens qui se sont élevés en moi. Vous les éprouverez. Vous jugerez, comme moi, qu'il y aurait de l'avantage à publier tout ceci. Mais souvenez-vous que les



should be guaranteed by the King of Prussia. Though both parties desired to keep it secret, it could not long be concealed from us; and the knowledge of Buonaparte's disappointment rather increased Lord Hawkesbury's expectations of being able to avoid a rupture without relinquishing Malta, which he had now entirely resolved, at least for the present, not to do. This belief was further strengthened by a step of M. Otto, which it was impossible to suppose had been taken without the privity of the First Consul. He was now at Paris; and availed himself of his previous official acquaintance with the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to write him a private and confidential letter (as if a minister in Lord Hawkesbury's position could possibly receive one of such a character from a diplomatist in the employ of the French Government). Avowing his sole object to be the maintenance of peace, he sought to coax the English minister over to his, or rather to Buonaparte's, views; assuring him that "Malta could not be retained by England without becoming the

*justes égards dus au Souverain qui me donne asile m'ont déterminé à garder le silence ; et imitez ma réserve. J'excepte cependant de cette loi votre fils cadet, et MM. le Duc d'Orléans, le Duc de Montpensier, le Comte de Beaujolais, le Prince de Condé, et le Duc de Bourbon. Ceci n'est pas une simple confiance d'amitié entre frères. Si jamais le mot de feu M. le Prince de Conty, 'La couronne nous appartient à tous, notre aîné la porte,' fut applicable à un cas, c'est à celui-ci, et vous voyez par ce que votre fils aîné a écrit au bas de ma note que je l'ai le premier instruit de l'affaire. Je n'écris point en particulier à chacun des autres, cela est inutile, puisque je vous charge de leur faire part de ce qui se passe. Prescrivez leur également silence et en mon nom. Quant aux réponses à la proposition, soit qu'elles soient faites en commun, soit que chacun fasse individuellement la sienne, il faudra me les adresser, mais doubles, afin que j'en garde une, et que je fasse passer l'autre en original au Roi de Prusse.*

"Vous n'avez pas besoin de conseil, mais je ne puis me refuser à une réflexion, c'est que la modération dans les formes accroît la force du fonds. Le tems, mon ami, dévoile tout : ceci sera donc connu un jour, et j'ose me flatter que ce chapitre ne défacera pas notre histoire.

"Adieu, mon cher frère, je vous aime et vous embrasse de tout mon cœur.

"LOUIS ANTOINE."

immediate cause of war: this was the firm opinion, not only of the First Consul, but of every man in the (French) Administration, and, he might add, of every French citizen who loved his country, and who felt any regard for the dignity of its government. In fact, the Treaty of Amiens resolved itself into a convention about Malta."

An underhand attempt like this on the part of the First Consul to carry his point by private solicitation naturally led to the suspicion that he was more unwilling to have recourse to hostilities than he wished us to believe. Lord Whitworth's report of the general state of feeling in France was very different from M. Otto's account of it. The ambassador reported "that the general opinion of the most sober and sensible people, particularly in the class of ~~senators~~, was decidedly against the First Consul. That they were persuaded that England was right; and that, if we were forced to have recourse to hostilities, we should be driven to that necessity by his restless and mad ambition." And in the middle of March, on the very same day on which Buonaparte had collected a Court in his wife's apartments, for the express purpose of publicly attacking the British ambassador on the subject,<sup>1</sup> Lord Whitworth received a most singular proof that even those most nearly connected with the First Consul differed from the resolution which he entertained, or at least expressed, on the subject. The occurrence was so extraordinary that he would not venture to send his report by his own messenger except in cypher:

*Most secret and confidential.*

Paris, 14th March, 1803.

MY LORD,

A person entirely in the confidence of M. Lucien Buonaparte has commissioned a gentleman<sup>2</sup> who frequently visits me, and in

<sup>1</sup> "Au cercle de Madame Buonaparte il a saisi l'occasion d'exprimer sa juste indignation devant une assemblée faite pour donner de l'éclat à ses paroles."—*Correspondance de Napoléon I.* viii. 250 (Letter to General Hedouville, dated March 16, 1803).

<sup>2</sup> M. Huber, a Swiss gentleman.

whom I place confidence, to suggest to me the possibility of engaging the First Consul to consent to our keeping possession of Malta ; that is to say, his family might perhaps be induced, for a valuable consideration, to obtain his consent to our retaining that possession. It is not meant that the First Consul would sell us Malta. But his relatives, who have such an interest in preserving the peace, might, by such means, be engaged to exert their influence over him for that purpose. And, in order to satisfy the First Consul, and to palliate the transaction, at the same time that a sacrifice of money is made to their avarice, some offer might be made to the pride of the First Consul, such as the acknowledgment of any Government not yet acknowledged, or assistance in shipping, or any other way in the recovering his authority at St. Domingo.

I throw this out to your Lordship as it was thrown out to me. In the present state of the business it cannot be kept too secret ; and I should very much recommend that it be communicated only to Mr. Addington and Lord Liverpool. I am sure that your Lordship would feel the inconvenience of its being submitted to the Cabinet. I have, &c. &c.

WHITWORTH.

It must be added that, though he had no doubt of the sincerity of Lucien in the matter, and indeed there could be but little question of the eagerness of every member of the First Consul's family to promote the success of any transaction calculated to enrich themselves,<sup>1</sup> Lord Whitworth had no great confidence in the efficacy of the means proposed. Three days afterwards he writes, that though "such an advantage could not be too dearly purchased," and though "in such a matter parsimony would defeat its own end, he was, however, at the same time far from satisfied that the thing was practicable. Those who undertook it would have to contend with every obstacle which pride and revenge could oppose to them." At the

<sup>1</sup> The *Mémoires* of De Bourrienne, which indeed are corroborated by more than one passage in the Napoleon Correspondence, are full of stories proving the inordinate rapacity of all Buonaparte's relatives and connexions.

same time he was "persuaded that, after the First Consul had vented his ill-humour, and when he should come to reflect on the little advantage to be gained by a war with England, and on the slender means he possessed of engaging in it, we should find him more tractable." Circumstances, however, varied every day, and our ambassador's opinion of them was necessarily subject to the same fluctuations. A week after his first letter, he forwarded another despatch, using the same precautions for secrecy, and reporting that "It was now thought that the family of the First Consul would not be strong enough to stand alone the brunt of his violence and obstinacy. It had been judged, therefore, that the gaining over Talleyrand would be more likely to ensure success." He was to be sounded in a day or two, and Lord Whitworth thought that, "when his personal interest was so strongly engaged, we might depend on his zealous support." Lord Hawkesbury, in his reply to the first intimation of this plan, had intimated a willingness to give Lucien 100,000*l*. This Lord Whitworth thought would be far too small a sum, but added, though as yet the parties had not specified what they expected, that, even though the expense should prove considerable, we were at least sure that that of one campaign, or even a long continuance of the present demonstration, would be infinitely greater; and he therefore hoped Lord Hawkesbury would be prepared to meet any terms he might have to propose, on the calculation rather of the money saved than of the money expended. The acknowledgments<sup>1</sup> at first suggested as likely to influence the First Consul Lord Whitworth had on further consideration abandoned, partly as too inconsistent with our previously avowed principles of policy, and partly lest "by such a step we might indispose Russia irreconcilably to our views."

A day or two later he had more precise intelligence to furnish. The member of Buonaparte's family to be

<sup>1</sup> Of Governments recently established in Italy.

bribed was not Lucien, but Joseph; who "had been sounded, and was well-disposed" Not that Lucien was not equally willing to be "well-disposed," but Joseph, it was thought, "would unite more cordially with M. de Talleyrand than Lucien;" and Lord Whitworth had become more anxious than ever "to impress upon Lord Hawkesbury that this business should not be marred by any parsimony. It might be necessary to dazzle these people by the fortunes they may make. It must not be considered as a common bribe, or as common secret-service money, but rather as a grand operation of state. . . . It must be considered that many persons are to be gained; all in the very first situations, and all partaking the pillage of this country [France]; consequently above the temptation of a common bribe." Lord Whitworth's ideas of what might be necessary, if not beyond Lord Hawkesbury's expectations, were at all events too grand for Mr. Addington. "I have no fixed idea," he continues, "of what may be necessary; but in calculating what we may expend in one month of war, the sacrifice of a million, or even of two millions, would be economy." Lord Whitworth's private letters of this date are strongly indicative of the uncertain character of the whole policy of the French Government at the time, influenced as it was partly by the singular character of the First Consul himself, so strangely made up of impulse and of patience, of arrogance and violence, combined with and often bridled by the most farsighted calculation. At one moment the British ambassador was driven to the conclusion that "we should never be able to keep possession of Malta without fighting for it, and was equally persuaded that by giving it up we should not avoid a war unless we had made up our minds to see the Corsican take possession of Egypt, and cut and carve as he thought proper; and, even in that case, he feared for Portugal." At another moment he repeated his belief that "the French Government, at the same time that it endeavoured to put a good face on the matter, was seriously occupied

in devising expedients by which to give us the security we required as a preliminary to the evacuation of Malta." He added, "In talking this matter over, Talleyrand made use of an expression which had not yet escaped him, 'Quand est-ce donc que votre gouvernement prononcera un *si*? Nous evacuerons Malthe *si*.' . . . They evidently wish we should propose some modification, and we may be sure that the firmer our tone the better will be the terms, should we be willing to consent to any."

At the end of another week Lord Whitworth was able to report that he had made some progress in negotiation with Joseph, which however, in one sense, he admitted to be no progress at all; but his despatch is sufficiently interesting and curious to deserve to be given without abridgment:

*Secret and Confidential.*

Paris, March 31st, 1803.

MY LORD,

Before I proceed to give your Lordship an account of my interview with Joseph Bonaparte, I should inform your Lordship that, it having been judged absolutely necessary to the success of the transaction to gain M. Talleyrand, I had, the day before, by means of M. Huber, who first suggested to me the possibility of establishing such a party; who brought me the first information from the friend of Lucien; and who, from his habits of intimacy with many considerable people here, and particularly with M. Talleyrand, possesses the means of rendering himself highly useful, sounded him on the subject. He immediately started all those difficulties which might be expected from one who is daily in the habit of witnessing and suffering from the violence of the First Consul, and repeatedly declared that he would hear of nothing short of the execution of the Treaty of Amiens in all its points. When he had exhausted this topic, and was told that a party was actually formed, the object of which was to combat this determination of the First Consul; that Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte, and in all probability Madame Bonaparte, would act in concert with him; and that very considerable pecuniary advantages might be derived from it to himself; his tone was

softened. He expressed great surprise, but no reluctance to afford his assistance ; he desired, however, two days to consider. M. Huber then told him it was absolutely necessary I should see Joseph Bonaparte, that I felt the advantages which might result from a direct communication of this kind, but that I am scrupulous of taking any indirect road, being, as I was, so perfectly satisfied with my official intercourse with him, and had therefore determined to avoid it unless it should meet with his concurrence. This I did in order to give a proof of my wish to conciliate, and because I am as much persuaded of the advantage of gaining his co-operation as I am of the difficulties he might throw in our way were he to be against us. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied with my intention of seeing Joseph Bonaparte, and on the whole gave us reason to suppose that the time he has desired will confirm him in the disposition we could wish.

I yesterday, therefore, saw Joseph Bonaparte ; and although this interview produced nothing sufficiently decisive to justify any very sanguine expectation of his successful interference, yet I think he said as much as he could say consistently with his situation and with the delicacy of the transaction. It has so happened that, partly with a view to the assistance I might receive from him in an emergency like the present, and partly on account of his personal good qualities, I have cultivated his acquaintance more than that of any other individual, so that we were both relieved from our natural embarrassment. I began the conversation by telling him (it had been previously agreed that I should not allude to any private transaction) that, if I importuned him by talking of our affairs, he must impute it to the sincere desire I had to avert the calamities of war, and to effect a perfect and permanent good understanding between the two Governments ; that I applied to him rather than to any other because I knew him to be the friend of peace, because it was he who negotiated the peace, and who consequently could distinguish better than any other what was the letter and what was the spirit of the 'Treaty of Amiens. He here took up the conversation to assure me that I judged him rightly, that he was anxiously desirous of peace, and that there was nothing he would not do, consistently with



the good of the country, to preserve it, but that he saw no means of effecting that purpose unless we were disposed to execute fully and unequivocally the treaty we had entered into; that by the treaty we were bound to evacuate Malta; and the First Consul would not, and indeed could not, consent to its being infringed. On this I appealed to him in his capacity of negotiator of that treaty, endeavouring to draw the line between the letter and the spirit, and maintaining that if we hesitated in this instance to fulfil the former, the latter had been infringed by the First Consul from the very moment of its execution to the present time. I then went over the old ground, enumerating the acquisitions which had been made by France since the peace, and I assured him that, although his Majesty's ministers had not thought themselves justified in breaking off the negotiation, as they were very much tempted to do, yet it could not but be naturally expected that the conduct of the French Government had excited such mistrust and jealousy, as must break out on the first occasion. This occasion had unfortunately soon been given by the manifestation of the First Consul's views on Egypt; that this was a point on which it was impossible we could be indifferent, since it could be considered in no other light than as a direct attack upon ourselves; that fortunately those views had been published before we had evacuated the island of Malta, and consequently it became incumbent on his Majesty's ministers, as a means of defence, to keep possession of it until confidence could be restored. This naturally led to a repetition of the same assurances which I have on different occasions received from M. de Talleyrand, of the total renunciation, on the part of the First Consul, of any project he might have had in contemplation, to which of course I paid but little attention. I did not scruple to tell him that there was not a man at all conversant with politics in any country, and even in this, who did not believe that the First Consul would invade Egypt at every risk the moment we were out of the Mediterranean; and that, impressed with such a belief, he must be sensible we could not relinquish the only point from whence such a project might be defeated. That in our hands Malta was but a point of defence. It was far from our intention to distress the trade of

this country in the Mediterranean; we were, on the contrary, ready to come to any understanding on that subject. That Malta was necessary to us as a safeguard to Egypt, and in no other point of view.

After talking over this matter at some length, he assured me that Malta was not, as we supposed, the real cause of the difficulty on the part of the First Consul; were there no other, it might perhaps be got over. But that which never could was the sense of shame and loss of reputation which must result from his acquiescence on this occasion, more particularly after the measure which had been resorted to in England. He was very warm on this subject, repeating those phrases which are constantly in the mouth of the First Consul: that he does not live for the present, that he exists for posterity; that his honour is dearer to him than his life; that, if he forfeits that, he forfeits the only hold he has on the confidence of this country; and many more sentiments of this nature, which cannot but appear, on a very small retrospect, somewhat extraordinary. In opposition to these feelings, I endeavoured to place the danger to which he would expose this country, his own situation, and that of his family and friends, all involved in the same fate. He admitted the whole force of this argument, but still insisted on the determination of the First Consul, to which, however, he was almost disposed to apply the term of obstinacy, not to recede from the full execution of the Treaty of Amiens. I regretted that a mere point of punctilio should be put in competition with the numberless misfortunes to which a renewal of hostilities might, and most probably would, expose this country, and consequently the individual interests of the First Consul and his family. I endeavoured to make him sensible of the great disadvantage under which they would now renew the contest; that we should, it is true, have the burthen of a war to support, but that would undoubtedly be borne with the same patience, and with the same loyalty, which had animated his Majesty's subjects during the whole of the late conflict. France had the same, and still greater, pecuniary difficulties to contend with, with the addition of an unsettled Government, a disputed title, and a formidable party always ready to avail itself of the first opportunity of giving effect to

its malevolence. This would naturally be considered by the First Consul and his family, and, when put in the scale against a mere sacrifice of punctilio, would, I trusted, leave no room for hesitation. In reply to this, he adverted to the means by which the First Consul had attained his present situation ; that he owed it all to his character ; that that alone maintained him ; and that, if he once gave that up, he exposed himself to greater danger than he could possibly incur by a recourse to war, which would only prove still stronger to the country that it had no resource but in his military talents.

Your Lordship will perceive from this sketch of my first conversation that no great hope is given of a change in the First Consul's determination ; but a direct and confidential intercourse is established with Joseph Bonaparte, who has free access to him when he pleases, who certainly has, if not great influence, at least all the advantages which temper and moderation must always have on violence and passion. I cannot, therefore, but think that the business is in a fair way, supposing it may be judged expedient to accomplish it by the means I have pointed out. We must, however, in that case, make up our minds to be more than liberal, for I repeat again that small considerations avail but little in great objects, and when they are to be attained by persons in great situations. I think, therefore, we may reasonably expect to carry our point, whether we choose to abide by the effect of our demonstration, or to employ the means to which this despatch has a reference. The one might be attended with some risk, and certainly with great loss of time and money ; the other may be equally effectual, with the advantage of expedition and economy.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient, humble Servant,

WHITWORTH.

On one point the Cabinet at home differed from the views expressed by their ambassador. They would not refuse to gratify Buonaparte by the acknowledgment of the Italian states, which Lord Whitworth had first suggested, but of which he had subsequently, as we have seen, discarded the idea. On the contrary, at a council

held on the 3d of April, and attended by every member of the Cabinet, they addressed a minute to the King, stating that "they were unanimously of opinion: firstly, that if Malta could be retained, and the Levant and the Turkish empire thereby secured, it would be desirable to facilitate such an arrangement, by acknowledging, what we cannot prevent, the new Italian states. And secondly, that if the French Government were determined to oppose the retention of Malta, they should be called upon to propose *some equivalent security* for those objects which would be endangered by the removal of his Majesty's forces from Malta under the present circumstances. It was their opinion likewise that no time should be lost in bringing the present discussions to an issue; and that, if the French Government should decline all negotiation, Lord Whitworth should be instructed to leave Paris."

There could be no doubt whatever of the wisdom of the decision intimated in the last sentence, for the feverish state of uncertainty in which the kingdom had been kept for some months was worse even than war itself; and instructions in accordance with this minute were sent to Lord Whitworth, to make a formal offer that, on condition of "Malta remaining in perpetuity in the possession of his Majesty, and of the French troops evacuating Holland and Switzerland, we would take on ourselves the indemnification of the knights of St. John, would confirm the acquisition of Elba by France, and acknowledge the King of Etruria, and the Italian and Ligurian republics." Lord Whitworth fulfilled his orders, as, indeed, he always did, with great ability; and, in the conversation which he had with Talleyrand on delivering to him the paper containing these proposals, he did not refuse to forward a counter-memorandum by the French minister, which, however, contained no definite proposal, but merely expressed a general willingness to agree to "anything which might tend to put an end to the present difficulties, or be agreeable to the English Government, and which should not be contrary

to the Treaty of Amiens ;” explaining to Lord Hawkesbury in his public despatch that his motive for consenting to forward such a paper was an idea that it was just possible that Buonaparte might be led to consent to our retaining temporary possession of Malta for a fixed term of years. But in his private letter he expressed a fear that he could no longer “hold out any sanguine expectation of concluding this discussion on our own terms without having recourse to hostilities. Nevertheless he should still continue his secret dealings with Joseph Buonaparte and Talleyrand, feeling assured that the First Consul’s family, ministers, and the public at large all felt the danger of war ; so that he firmly believed that, if it were left to the decision of any individual in France, except the First Consul himself and a few of his rapacious generals, Malta would not be suffered to stand for an instant in the way of peace.” Though he had forwarded Talleyrand’s counter-proposal, he “had not given him the least hope that anything short of the permanent possession of Malta would do.” But the First Consul himself he looked on as a most “intractable character.” The funds were falling from the anticipation of war, and he was vainly endeavouring to bolster them up by sending his brothers to buy stock with ostentatious openness. But the more his subjects showed their disinclination to war, the more willing he seemed to be to renew it. Each day increased Lord Whitworth’s conviction of the obstinacy of Buonaparte himself, but at the same time each day also confirmed his knowledge of the accessibility of all about him, his brothers and all, to bribes. Talleyrand and Joseph Buonaparte were those who set the greatest value on their services ; but “the venality of all,” he reported, “was beyond all imagination : he could not but think that, if we had tempted it in the negotiation at Amiens, we should not now be negotiating on the present differences :” and even now he would not absolutely despair, if money could be forthcoming in sufficiently large sums. Money, however,

Mr. Addington was apparently unwilling to provide to the amount expected: and, indeed, there were difficulties in the way of his doing so which, obvious as they were, escaped Lord Whitworth in his anxiety to terminate the dispute between the two nations peaceably; the chief one being that it would be impossible for the ministers to disclose how they had expended it, and, in all probability, equally impracticable to induce the House of Commons to sanction such an expenditure in the dark. Even had the money been furnished, it is probable that it would have been useless, since, before the end of April, Talleyrand informed Lord Whitworth from the First Consul that "no consideration on earth should induce him to consent to a concession in perpetuity of Malta in any shape whatever; he would never suffer Great Britain to acquire a possession in the Mediterranean." And a day or two after the same minister stated that he was equally resolved not to hear of our keeping even "temporary possession" of it. It was to no purpose that Lord Whitworth reminded the Frenchman that in fact we had possession, and that "the recent conduct of the French Government had rendered it so necessary for our security" that, "rather than abandon it, we were prepared to go to war." Talleyrand offered us Lampedosa, without, it must be supposed, the slightest expectation that we should accept it, even if it had belonged to France to bestow, which it did not. We refused it; and, after one or two more interviews, in which the French minister made one or two other proposals, manifestly only to gain time, Lord Whitworth demanded his passports, as he had been ordered to demand them, and on the 12th of May quitted Paris to return to England.

## CHAPTER IV.

Renewal of the secret negotiations—Debate on the renewal of the war—Pitt's disapproval of the ministers' policy—Great division in their favour—Col. Crawford's proposal to fortify London—Lord Hawkesbury is removed to the House of Lords—His opinion of the weakness of the German and Russian Governments—Buonaparte's measures towards Spain and Portugal—Portugal applies to us for aid—Plans for the partition of Turkey—Peculiarities of the constitution of Turkey—Buonaparte's colonial losses and plans for the invasion of Great Britain—Death of the Duc d'Enghien—Louis XVIII. applies to Britain for an asylum—Renewed illness of George III.—General discontent with Addington—Pitt writes to the King—The Volunteer Bill—Pitt writes again to the King—Addington resigns, and Pitt becomes Prime Minister—Lord Hawkesbury becomes Home Secretary.

YET even now so intense was the eagerness of Joseph Buonaparte for his expected bribes, that he once more had recourse to the same agent, who had been originally employed, to convey to Lord Whitworth an intimation that he might perhaps still be able to avert war, and yet leave us in possession of Malta, if we would acquiesce in the First Consul making an arrangement with the King of the Two Sicilies, by which he might become master of Otranto and Taranto. M. Huber found that Talleyrand had entertained the same views, and indeed that he had even sent a messenger to London to propose such a compromise. The simple Swiss gentleman assured the wily minister that he thought the proposal might be accepted; but the British Cabinet rejected it without a moment's hesitation. The King of the Two Sicilies might not be



strong enough to resist the cession which Buonaparte was inclined to extort from him, but it could not become us to make ourselves parties to such an act of spoliation, alike devoid of all reasonable pretext and contrary to all national law.<sup>1</sup> Lord Hawkesbury looked on this proposition, thus made at, or even after, the last moment, as a mere repetition of the attempt to gain time, which, indeed, was of great importance to the First Consul. For Buonaparte had been so accustomed to see everything yield to his will, he had been allowed to dictate with such absolute authority to all the sovereigns on the Continent, that he could not conceive that we should really prefer war to submission; and therefore, thinking that hostilities would not recommence till he himself should choose, he had allowed his army to fall into considerable temporary disarrangement. A great many men in every regiment were on furlough; his cavalry wanted remounts; and the branch which he had looked on with peculiar favour, the artillery, was in a particularly defective state, the old guns which had been worn out in his recent campaigns not having been replaced, because he had ordered a series of experiments to be gone through before fresh ones were cast.<sup>2</sup> The result was that for above

<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet very becomingly say, "Neither England nor France has a right to dispose of a town or port belonging to an independent sovereign, and that his Majesty will never participate in the smallest degree in any system of spoliation." (Lord Malmesbury, iv. 252.) Lord Malmesbury, however, represents the French proposal as merely one to allow France to occupy Otranto [by itself] for the same period [probably ten years] as we were to retain Malta for. But M. Huber, in his letter to Lord Whitworth, twice says expressly that their demand was for Taranto as well as Otranto, and makes no express mention of these towns ever being restored, though the term he uses is certainly only "occuper."

<sup>2</sup> If the views which, according to Las Casas (*Mémoires*, v. 8), Napoleon explained in a conversation at St. Helena, were those which he had really entertained at this time, he had desired to continue at peace with England till he had settled the whole of the affairs of the Continent according to his own inclination, till he had raised an army and fleet which we should have found absolutely irresistible with our smaller population: 15,000,000 of English against 40,000,000 of French.

two years he was comparatively inactive, arming indeed against us once more the hostility of Spain and Holland, but augmenting his own enemies in a still greater degree : increasing his personal rank by the assumption of the imperial title, and crushing his domestic foes by the banishment of some, the public execution of others, and, it can hardly be doubted, the private assassination of at least one ; but at the same time alienating the most honest of his own subjects (to say nothing of the offence given to all Europe) by the lawless seizure and destruction of a prince who had never offended, nor had the means of offending, him. And meanwhile waiting for blows from others instead of inflicting them ; blows which came surely and heavily ; for, before he had gained a single victory on land, his fleet was annihilated, and all hope of prosecuting the conquests of which he had dreamt in the East, or of inflicting the slightest injury on Britain except through the sides of her allies, was for ever dissipated.

The Ministry and the Opposition in England must, of course, both have foreseen that the war on our side would be carried on mainly by sea ; and neither party could have doubted what would be the result of battles fought there by Nelson and his pupils. But no consideration of that kind influenced the Parliament for a moment in the decision to which both Houses speedily came on the momentous subject of the renewal of the war. More than one question was raised in the debates which occupied their attention the week after the King had announced to them that he had withdrawn his ambassador from Paris, or, in other words, that he was about to embark in war. One point raised was, whether under existing circumstances the war was justifiable ; a second, which, it could not be denied,

as he stated the difference), and by roads and canals had organized such a complete system of internal communication as would enable him to concentrate his whole force, or any portion of it which he might consider sufficient, at any point of the coast without our being aware of his movements.

might be considered independently of the former, was whether the conduct of the ministers had been prudent in allowing the negotiations, the failure of which was the immediate cause of war, to assume the complexion which they had ultimately presented; whether, in short, at an earlier stage of them the necessity, the cruel necessity, of renewing hostilities could not have been prevented. On the first it may be almost said that there was no difference of opinion. From some accidental mismanagement, which enabled the general crowd of ordinary visitors to obtain seats in the galleries of the House of Commons to the exclusion of the reporters, very little is known of the debate on the address, which was moved by Lord Hawkesbury himself in reply to the royal message.<sup>1</sup> His speech, however, was so conclusive as to the impossibility of avoiding war unless, by the surrender of Malta, we would place ourselves absolutely at the First Consul's mercy, that even Mr. Grey, the steady partisan of the Jacobin party in France, could not refuse to support the Crown in the impending war, though he moved an amendment censuring the conduct of the ministers. Nor could Fox, though he adopted Grey's view and several of his arguments, refrain from condemning many of the demands which Buonaparte had put forward. He did, indeed, extenuate the First Consul's desire to obtain Egypt so far as to deny that it afforded a sufficient cause for going to war, arguing that former Cabinets had felt that it did not do so, since sixteen or seventeen years before we had made a commercial treaty with France at the very time when M. de Vergennes, then Prime Minister of that country, was known to be preparing to send forth an expedition against Egypt. Indeed he attacked Pitt, who in the earlier part of the debate had approved the war, and had exhorted the ministers to prepare to commence hostilities with vigour, even more fiercely

<sup>1</sup> Pitt's speech, pronounced by some of his hearers to have been the finest (it must have been among the finest) that he ever delivered, is unreported for this reason—(See Lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, ii. 46.)

than he criticised Addington. But he could convince only a small number of even his own friends. Windham openly denounced his speech as one which sought an unworthy popularity by supporting selfishness against patriotism, and by opposing private considerations to grand views of national policy ; and at last, after a debate of two nights, the Ministry had a triumphant majority of 398 against 67 ; that small number being all that their Whig opponents could muster.

But the main conflict took place ten days later, when in the House of Peers Lord Fitzwilliam, and in the Commons Colonel Patten, moved a long series of resolutions, condemning the Government for having failed to keep Parliament from time to time informed of the state of affairs, of the conduct of France, and of the steps taken by themselves in consequence of that conduct ; and, again, for not having made "timely and adequate representations" against those acts of France with which they were dissatisfied, representations which, it was contended, would either have arrested the aggressions of that country, or, if France would not desist from them, would have prevented his Majesty from reducing his forces and surrendering his conquests, especially the Cape of Good Hope, and would thus have placed him in a better position for renewing the war. The resolutions were wordy and prolix in a most unusual degree : they were supported by the Grenvilles, who in the former debate had approved of the war ; and Pitt, who on that occasion had strongly advocated an unanimous agreement to the address, now no longer supported the ministers, though he still abstained, in words, from blaming them ; and moving the previous question,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pitt had made up his mind to this course some days before. On the 18th of May Lord Malmesbury records : "Canning early ; little to say. Pitt, who, *he* says, thinks as *he* does, will attend on the 24th to give his opinion ; means to *fire over the heads* of the Government, *i.e.* not to blame or praise them, but to support war measures" (iv. 254). This second debate took place June 3d.

declared that he did so because, while he could not concur in the extent of the charges involved in the proposed resolutions, he could not, on the other hand, affirm that the explanation afforded by the ministers, upon general points, was so clear as to justify a decided negative of them. He alleged, as apparently his chief reason for abstaining from a formal censure of the ministers, that "he was aware of the inconveniences which would result from such a measure as the present motion, unless the clearest necessity existed for it, unless such interference by Parliament could be justified by some extraordinary exigency of affairs." He intimated, indeed, by implication, that he saw "considerable grounds for dissatisfaction at their conduct," but he considered that to pass a vote of censure on them now, which would be tantamount to a vote of removal, must, "by unsettling the whole system of government, diminish our means of sustaining the struggle in which we were engaged, and of calling forth those resources necessary for our defence." Not only would a change of the Administration be a temporary suspension of the functions of the executive Government, but the new ministers who might succeed would feel themselves for some time in a delicate situation, which must disable them in some degree from a satisfactory discharge of their duties. He declined "entering into any detailed discussion of the papers" which had been laid before Parliament. "Things more urgent, more important, demanded our care," and he would prefer to see the House "keeping the Parliamentary pledge which it had given by showing its determination to support his Majesty with their lives and fortunes; and the ministers showing themselves alive to and equal to the situation in which they found themselves by presenting a strong bill of supply, providing resources not merely for every demand of the public service, but adequate to every scale of execution: a measure that would display and call forth the means of sustaining the struggle, not merely for one year, but till we should have brought it to a successful issue; some

measure by which we should be enabled to complete our army, and to call into action the national strength, and give activity to all the military skill, discipline, and experience we possess."

Addington himself was the only minister who had spoken before Pitt, and he had probably not anticipated the course which his predecessor and patron was about to take, though in fact it was chiefly at him that Pitt's remarks had been aimed, since what Pitt doubted was not so much the propriety of what had hitherto been done, not even of the restoration of the Cape to the Dutch, as Addington's financial competency to provide the necessary means for the energetic warfare which he described as indispensable. As usual the brunt of the battle for the defence of the Ministry fell on the Foreign Secretary, and he at once followed Pitt, refusing to accept his amendment as less of a censure than the original resolutions. He argued with great force, that when a direct vote of censure had been moved, the question was of too great importance to be shirked by passing on, as Pitt had proposed, to the orders of the day; ministers were entitled to demand a direct decision, negative or affirmative, a direct acquittal or condemnation. He dwelt with great force on Pitt's avoidance of details: "On such a question the Ministry had a right to expect details, to require that he should point out especially what parts of their conduct he disapproved. It was not impossible that in a long and arduous negotiation some points of their management might afford grounds for difference of opinion even among their friends. But in a country like this he always considered it to be the first principle both of support and of opposition to ministers, that those who agreed or disagreed with them should do so on a general view of their whole conduct. It could not be expected that all should approve of every particular point, but members should overlook minor differences for the sake of giving effect to the general scheme of policy which they approved." He appealed with great effect to Pitt's own conduct on the question of



the Russian armament, when Pitt himself declined to meet a vote of censure by any evasive motion such as that of the previous question, but the charge was met boldly and directly negatived. Pitt's present motion was "a censure in disguise, under delay; but ministers could not, would not, acquiesce in the discredit of a suspended censure. They had no such desire to retain their places at all hazards as could lead them to submit to such a compromise with condemnation. Neither he nor his colleagues desired to remain in office longer than they could be useful to their country. For himself, if he felt that he was reduced to that situation in which he could not serve his country with advantage, he would carry the seals to the feet of his gracious sovereign, and entreat him to appoint a successor more worthy. It was because he would not remain in office discredited and useless that he opposed the previous question, for he would not retain it one hour after he had reason to think that he had forfeited the confidence of the House and the good opinion of the country."

There can be no doubt that Lord Hawkesbury was correct in the view which he thus expressed of Pitt's amendment. It looked like the motion of one "willing to wound and yet afraid to strike:" and Lord Hawkesbury's course of insisting on treating it as a vote of censure not less distinct than the resolutions themselves seemed more manly, and as such commended itself both to the House and to the country.<sup>1</sup> In a description of the debate which he transmitted to his father he explained Pitt's conduct, which he characterised as "certainly most extraordinary and most unaccountable," by his belief that "he had been

<sup>1</sup> The Annual Register, at this time, as has been mentioned before, wholly in the interest of the Opposition, admits. "It is but justice to say that the manly and spirited manner in which the latter (Lord Hawkesbury) rejected the species of compromise recommended by Mr Pitt, heretofore his great friend and patron, and his calling on the Senate for either direct acquittal or condemnation, gained, as it deserved, considerable respect and approbation."



worked upon by such of his personal friends as were enemies to the present Government, till his mind had become completely unhinged. He looked," he continued, "dreadfully ill, and his physician said that his nerves had been completely shaken by the state of agitation and uncertainty in which he had been lately kept.<sup>1</sup> The line which Mr. Fox took," the letter adds, "was a singular one. He voted with us on the question of the orders of the day. He abstained from voting on the second question; and stated that, with respect to the general tendency of the resolutions, since they must be considered as going to effect a change of administration, he was hostile to them, though he disapproved of the conduct of ministers in some respects. He did not wish to see them removed, because he did not think they were likely to be succeeded by any set of men who were more pacifically disposed. There were, however, several facts in the resolutions which he was not prepared to negative, and, as he was not ready to move any amendment, he should go away without voting. Sheridan and Erskine voted with us throughout."

The result of the division proved more favorable to the ministers than probably any one of either side expected. A majority of nearly 300 supported them on the amendment, and, many members having retired before the second division, one equally great in proportion voted with them on the main question of the resolutions.<sup>2</sup> Finding themselves thus supported they proceeded to increase the regular army; to encourage the formation of strong corps of volunteers; and to equip a fleet overpowering in numbers, and still more irresistible from the tried skill of the great officers who

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Abbot records, as *the key* to Pitt's conduct, that different circumstances had led him to believe that Addington was secretly indisposing the King towards him, and playing falsely; and that this irritation, fomented by Canning and the Grenvilles, made him disposed to enter the Cabinet by force, and treat Mr. Addington as a perfidious friend."—LORD COLCHESTER'S *Diary*, i. 430.

<sup>2</sup> The precise numbers were:—On the amendment, 333 v. 56; on the resolutions, 275 v. 34.

served in it ; and in all their measures, even in one so novel to the constitution and practice of the nation as the raising an army of reserve by compulsory ballot, they received the almost unanimous support of both Houses of Parliament : perhaps the most remarkable feature in the debates which arose on the different details being a suggestion put forward by an independent member, Colonel Crawford, that steps should be taken to fortify London, our great naval arsenals, and some other places which he looked on as at once peculiarly important and peculiarly accessible, such as the mouth of the Humber and Newcastle ; and also to construct some lines of fortification for the internal defence of the country in the event of an enemy making good his landing on any part of the coast. Pitt, who on all recent occasions had supported the Ministry, warmly advocated this proposal also, as a sort of supplement to their plans ; adding, with prescient sagacity, a suggestion of his own, that for the defence of portions of our coast it might be well to multiply our smaller vessels, "and mount them with guns of heavy metal and carronades," so as to form a kind of floating battery. The Ministry, as a body, opposed it ; and perhaps a time of actual war may not be the season at which the construction of such extensive fortifications is most practicable. But the present generation has seen the idea adopted, and Pitt's proposition of floating batteries regarded, by those most competent to judge, as not the least efficacious portion of the scheme.

It has been mentioned that Pitt's objections were really to the Minister's financial measures, some of which he compelled him in some degree to remodel. And the general opinion of the country was scarcely concealed that Addington was unequal to the office which he was filling in a time of war. Yet so unconscious did he seem of his difficulties that, at the end of the session, he weakened himself in the House of Commons by removing Lord Hawkesbury to the House of Lords. It was a singular and ill-judged step, for the eloquence which at times he had to encounter

in the House of Commons was the most formidable that had ever assailed a Government : leaving Pitt, whose support was now but occasional, out of the question, Fox, Canning, Sheridan, and Grey, were adverse to him on almost every question ; and Lord Hawkesbury was the only speaker of any power or weight whom he had to oppose to them, while in the House of Lords Lord Grenville was the only opponent who could at all be considered formidable, and for him the Chancellor was more than a match. The promotion, for such in some sense it must be considered, was not in accordance with the wishes and judgment of Lord Hawkesbury himself, and still less with those of his father, who already began to look forward to his becoming Prime Minister. Lord Liverpool was convinced that Mr. Addington could not stand, and that, even if Pitt should return to office for a time, his health must inevitably prevent his long continuance there (a prediction but too fatally verified). In such a position of affairs he pointed out to his son that the ball would be at his feet ; that all " Pitt's old friends would be very happy to serve under him ; that, as he had good reason to believe, many even of the partisans of Fox would not be unwilling to fight under the same banner ; that though the Grenvilles would be in opposition, they were so self-important and troublesome that it was better to have them as enemies than as friends ; but that his chance of carrying on the affairs of the kingdom with due energy and a fair prospect of success would be far better if, in the beginning at least, he were in the House of Commons than elsewhere." Lord Hawkesbury fully coincided in the justice of his father's views ; but he felt that he could not refuse the wishes of the Prime Minister, part of whose plan was the introduction of Mr. Tierney into the Government as Treasurer of the Navy, a measure which, as Tierney had formerly fought a duel with Pitt, seemed to the world in general a complete barrier to Pitt's resumption of office ; and its being so regarded was not perhaps its slightest recommendation in Addington's eyes. That Lord

Liverpool did not overrate the popularity of his son with all parties, and the high esteem in which his abilities as a speaker and a man of business were held, is proved by the circumstances<sup>1</sup> under which he was subsequently called to the head of affairs; but, though Lord Hawkesbury lost neither reputation nor influence by the removal, it is equally certain that it was a false step on the part of Addington himself, who more than once must have greatly regretted the loss of his aid in the debates of the ensuing session.

Meantime the French ruler was weakening rather than strengthening himself by his first measures, in spite of the appearance of success which they bore. He overran Hanover, and occupied Hamburg and Bremen; but this last step, and the subsequent closing of the Elbe and Weser against all commerce with Britain, were such violations of the rights of neutral Powers that they awakened deep discontent among the chief nations of Germany. As long, however, as that feeling exhaled in weak remonstrances, Buonaparte could afford to regard it with indifference, and no exertions of our Foreign Secretary could rouse those Powers to any stronger measures. As he wrote to his father, "The Court of Vienna appeared to be very feeble, that of Petersburg very flat, and that of Berlin very false;" and it was not till still greater violations of all established usages, and encroachments more immediately menacing to themselves, had warned them that they could no longer temporize with the potentate who was guilty of them, that the two former could be roused to an active resistance, while Prussia, increasing in falsehood, fell to such a depth of baseness as to seek the alliance of the despoiler of her German brethren, in the hope of being allowed to share in their spoils.

On the other side of France affairs for a moment seemed likely to lead to operations that would have anticipated the war which for years afterwards filled the whole Peninsula. Buonaparte felt that, in preparing for a war such as he hoped to be able to wage, his first want was money. To provide it he first sold Louisiana, which had been ceded

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, c. xi.

to him by the Treaty of Amiens, to the United States, for a sum exceeding 3,000,000*l.* sterling. And as his next step, though not yet insisting that Spain should openly declare war against us, which he was well aware could only ruin her without injuring us, he began to exert a pressure on that country and Portugal to compel them to pay him large monthly sums of money, exacting them from the first as an old ally, from the second as a nation which could only thus be prevented from being an enemy. Spain, Mr. Frere reported, was greatly irritated by the terms demanded of her; so greatly that he believed it not impossible that, by judicious bribes and compliments to the Prince of Peace and the principal ministers, we might even detach her from the side of France. And in Portugal the Prince Regent formally applied to us for assistance and support in order that he might be enabled to resist the exorbitant demands made upon him and his people. Our Cabinet was not disinclined to comply with the request, coming as it did from a people with whom we had been so long connected by treaties of alliance. But it was rightly judged necessary in the first place to ascertain what means Portugal possessed of helping herself. And with this view Lord Hawkesbury submitted to the King the advice of the Cabinet, that an officer of skill and reputation should be despatched to Portugal to see whether the native army corresponded to the account which M. Souza, the Prince Regent's minister, gave of it; and, if it should prove in such a state as to numbers and efficiency that, with moderate aid from us, there might seem a hope of its making effectual resistance (for it was clear that no large French force could be spared to compel Portugal to compliance), then Lord Hawkesbury and his colleagues were prepared to send four or six thousand men, including a strong division of cavalry, to reinforce the Portuguese army, and to enable it to resist the invasion of any French force of moderate strength. It need hardly be said that George III. fully concurred in the expediency of the plan thus submitted to him; but at the same time he did not conceal his conviction that the result

of an investigation of Portugal's power to protect herself would show it to be useless to try to help her in the manner proposed. "He feared that it was impossible for troops to be in a more helpless state than the Portuguese were at the present moment." And, unless our aid were likely to be effectual, he expressed a reasonable unwillingness "to diminish the means of defence both in this island and Ireland; as in both much must depend on our having cavalry, that being a branch which the enemy could not bring over to any great extent." His fears proved well founded: the Portuguese were so weak at the moment that the 6,000 men whom we might have furnished them would have been the largest half of their army; and Buonaparte gave them no time to strengthen themselves. Before the close of autumn they were compelled to follow the example of Spain in agreeing to contribute a large yearly sum towards the expenses which France would incur through the war.

The proposal of partitioning Turkey which France had made to Russia has been already mentioned. And the Turks themselves were aware of it, but regarded it with their usual indifference. Our ambassador, Mr. Drummond, wrote to Lord Hawkesbury in September: "The Russian dragoman has very lately, by order of M. Italinski, made a full avowal to the Porte of the proposition made by France for the partition of this empire. It was strongly recommended to them at the same time to take the measures of precaution which I had been long recommending [to increase the army in the Morea]. The answer which was made on this occasion by the Turkish Ministry was a little singular. It evinced much confidence, if it did not show consummate wisdom. They observed that it was very extraordinary that Buonaparte should presume to parcel out the Turkish empire without the permission of their magnificent emperor; that they defied Russia and France together to put such a scheme into execution; but that they could not understand why one of these Powers should not try to take the whole for itself without making another a partner in the spoil." Mr. Drummond expressed his conviction that

the Turkish empire was declining fast, and that the enemy which it had really to dread was Russia and not France, though Russia at this moment seemed to be its protector from France. And the whole course of subsequent transactions in that country has shown the soundness of this opinion. The greater part of his despatch refers to matters of which the interest was but temporary; the character of the Turkish ministers, and of the different ambassadors and envoys residing at Constantinople. But one paragraph is worth extracting, as giving a different idea of the Turkish constitution from that which is generally entertained. "We are generally taught to believe in England that the Ottoman empire is governed by a despot whose will is law, and whose minister, or favourite, disposes of the whole power under the authority of his sovereign. This is by no means the case. If indeed the Sultan desired to cut off the head of any one individual in his realm, there is no law against it, and there would probably be no opposition to it, provided the offender had no army under his command. Personal property and personal security, so well protected and so well defined by the law of England, are undoubtedly left at the mercy of the strongest in Turkey. But in all affairs of state, in all measures which comprehend the general politics of the country, the Sultan is not despotic; nor are his ministers possessed of much authority. The constitution of this Government is in fact oligarchical; and that may be the reason why it is not judged to be the best in the world. The supreme council consists of about ten or twelve members, and it is in this council that the most important measures are determined. The authority of the Sultan is indeed nominally paramount; but it is felt by all parties that it is not really so. The influence of the Ulemah<sup>1</sup> is on the other hand omnipotent. No measure can be safely proposed without the concurrence of this powerful body, and none carried into execution without their express consent. Several of these chiefs have seats in the supreme council, and any disrespect shown to

<sup>1</sup> The body of priests.



their opinion, when once given, would be productive of the most fatal consequences. Among the Ulemah are found the men most versed in the law, the faith, and the training of the Mussulmans; consequently the men whose minds have imbibed the greatest number of prejudices, and are the most perverted from common sense." It never occurred to Mr. Drummond as possible that half a century later France should be induced to unite with Great Britain to protect the Sultan from the very Power whom she now invited to join her in oppressing him; nor that a prince seated on the Ottoman throne would become so enlightened, and so sure of his authority, as voluntarily to introduce reforms of the character most distasteful to the Ulemah; that he would accept an order of Christian knighthood, and visit the chief nations of Christendom with a view not only of cultivating their goodwill towards himself, but of learning to improve the habits and ameliorate the condition of his subjects in general.

For many months after the renewal of the war the First Consul had almost ceaseless reason to repent his obstinate rejection of all our proposals. We were able to dispense with his consent to the retention of Malta; though we had restored the Cape to his ally, we had not given back Pondicherry to himself, and the West Indian islands which we had given up were recovered one after another; two being taken by us of which we had not previously been masters. His army in St. Domingo was reduced to surrender, and he was unable to retaliate on us in any quarter. His only consolation for the accumulated defeats which he was sustaining at our hands lay in forming plans, and making preparations on a more extensive scale than before, for the invasion of these islands, which kept our Government in a state of constant watchfulness, if not of apprehension. The ostentatious parade which he made of these preparations was probably intended to incline us to revive the negotiations for peace, which were rather suspended than wholly given up. At the time of the final rupture we had still intimated a

disposition to listen to the mediation of Russia, if that Power should be willing to interpose it. And though the Czar still hung back, it was possible that at any moment he might become desirous of putting an end to a state of things which was injurious to every nation in Europe. He was, however, personally offended with the First Consul, who, on one occasion, had lately insulted his ambassador at Paris, the Count de Marcoff, with almost as much rudeness as he had displayed to Lord Whitworth, openly accusing him, and the Russian Cabinet in general, of an unfair partiality to England.<sup>1</sup> And, as such charges have a tendency to verify themselves, Alexander made a strong and formal remonstrance to Talleyrand against several parts of Buonaparte's conduct in which he saw proofs of a contempt for the rights of all nations but France; and at the same time, by repeated acts of attention and kindness to our countrymen who chanced to be in his dominions, he gave indications of a rising desire to cultivate friendly relations with our nation. He was especially desirous that our Government should be fully informed of "great military preparations making by the French upon the coasts of the Adriatic Sea, the object of which was, without doubt, the Turkish empire," in order that a conviction of their designs might "make us more ready to take measures by means of our naval forces to oppose the enterprises of the First Consul in that part of the world."<sup>2</sup>

He was still, however, apparently watching for some opportunity of mediating with effect, when he might be able to procure the removal of his own causes for dissatis-

<sup>1</sup> The First Consul came up to him at the levee, and said, "Je sais que le Comte de Woronzow n'est pas favorable aux Français, qu'il aime les Anglais; et qu'il n'a pas fait tout ce qui dépend de lui pour empêcher la guerre;" and presently, "Il y a du double dans ceci, et si le Comte de Woronzow l'avait voulu il aurait pu contenir l'Angleterre;" and again, "Si l'Empereur comptait observer une conduite si vague vis-à-vis de la France, pourquoi lui a-t-elle jamais demandé des services?" (Malmesbury, iv. 266.)

<sup>2</sup> Despatch from Count Woronzow to his brother Count Simon Woronzow, the Russian ambassador in London.

faction, as well as ours, when the First Consul's crowning outrage, in his seizure and slaughter of the Duc d'Enghien, broke off not only every prospect of peace, but every desire to conclude one with a tyrant who could be guilty of so atrocious and unprovoked a crime.<sup>1</sup>

The following letter from the Prince de Condé, the father of the Duc d'Enghien, to the King of Sweden, will not be without interest :

Wanstead House, le 18 Avril, 1804.

AU ROI DE SUÈDE,

Après avoir payé le premier tribut de larmes que nous devons à la mémoire de l'infortuné Duc d'Enghien, et dont la source ne tarira jamais, notre premier soin, notre premier sentiment est de mettre aux pieds de V. M. notre vive et respectueuse reconnaissance de tous les soins généreux et touchans, qu'elle a bien voulu se donner, pour prévenir cet horrible assassinat ; votre grandeur d'âme, Sire, et votre sensibilité (qualités si rares aujourd'hui) viennent de se manifester dans cette cruelle occasion, d'un manière à vous attacher tous ceux qui méritent le nom d'hommes. Oh, Roi compatissant, et si noblement digne du rang que vous occupez, vous avez voulu sauver les Condés ! . . . le Ciel ne l'a pas permis. . . . Puisse au moins votre illustre exemple éveiller l'Europe, et faire sentir aux souverains à quel point il leur importe d'opposer enfin une résistance insurmontable par son ensemble et par son but, au torrent de crimes, dont un seul homme, si c'en est un, se propose d'inonder l'univers. Votre illustre père, Sire, vouloit prévenir toutes les horreurs de la Révolution en l'attaquant à force ouverte (hélas, que n'a-t-il été écouté, nous n'aurions pas à le pleurer lui-même) ! C'est peut-être à l'énergique sensibilité de V. M. qu'est réservée la gloire de sauver le monde

<sup>1</sup> Dumouriez, who was at this time in London, regarded the transaction at first, when it was only known that the Duke had been seized, in a singular point of view. He writes to a friend (the Baron de Bulen) at Munich : " On dit le Duc d'Enghien relâché. Je n'en crois rien. Je n'ose pas vous parler d'un fait qui déshonore l'Allemagne, et qui ne peut tourner qu'à la gloire de Buonaparte s'il excite sa *clémence*, ou à une terreur universelle s'il consulte sa *rigueur* et sa *justice*. Je reste pétrifié, non par la tête de Buonaparte-Méduse, mais par celle des têtes à perruques qui lui sont opposées." (Extract from a copy of the Letter in the Liverpool Papers.)

entier, en décidant par ses pressantes sollicitations les puissances de l'Europe à seconder par la force le vœux des trois quarts de la France, qui n'aspire qu'à rentrer sous l'obéissance de son roi légitime, en secouant le joug d'un monstre, qui ne connoit plus de moyens de prolonger son usurpation qu'en faisant couler les flots de sang et de larmes. J'oserais vous le répéter, Sire, une noble résistance clairement annoncée dans son seul but, imposante par la force de ses moyens, pure dans ses principes et dans ses suites, et prête à s'arrêter dès que le Roi de France, présent aux armées, pourroit reprendre avec sûreté les rênes de son royaume : voilà les seuls moyens de rendre le calme à l'Europe ; si je m'égare en ce moment, mon excuse est toute prête, et l'univers l'admettra ; comment ne pas se livrer à de grandes idées quand c'est au digne héritier des Gustave qu'on écrit.

Daignez, Sire, recevoir avec bonté nos plus sincères et nos plus respectueux remerciements des généreuses démarches que V. M. a bien voulu faire en faveur de l'intéressante victime, que le tyran du monde vient d'immoler à sa rage ; la reconnoissance que nous vous devons, Sire, est profondément gravée dans nos cœurs par l'amour paternel et l'admiration de vos vertus ; l'empreinte en est ineffaçable.

Je suis avec un profond respect,

Sire, de Votre Majesté,

Le très-humble et très-obéissant Serviteur,

LOUIS JOSEPH DE BOURBON.

The folly of this most infamous action was, as Fouché is reported to have said, more than equal to its wickedness. And it was more impolitic than even Fouché was quite aware, for, at the moment when it was committed, the King of Prussia was so dissatisfied with our continued claim to exercise our right of search over all vessels which entered our ports,<sup>1</sup> even when belonging to neutral Powers, that he

<sup>1</sup> "Le droit de visite que l'Angleterre se propose d'exercer indistinctement sur tous les vaisseaux neutres qui arrivent dans ses ports est une nouvelle mesure arbitraire dont il n'a jamais été question, et qui outrepassé dans leur plus grande étendue les principales stipulations des dernières conventions de 1801." (Extract from a despatch from the King of Prussia himself to his minister at St. James's, of which a copy is in the Liverpool Papers.)

was greatly inclined openly to break with us, and to range himself on the side of France, when even his selfish and sordid timidity was roused to a momentary feeling of indignation by the insult offered to the whole body of German princes in the violation of the Baden territory, and the still more terrible wrong done to royal blood by the murder of one whose relationship to kings was his sole offence.

The head of the Bourbons, the prince who afterwards remounted the throne of his ancestors under the title of Louis XVIII., and whom his faithful adherents never ceased to regard as their king, was at this time at Rome. But, even before the slaughter of his cousin, he had begun to think that city neither a sufficiently secure asylum, nor the Pope a sufficiently powerful protector, so manifest was the intention of the First Consul to reduce every authority in Italy to a state of subjection. He was resolved, indeed, to remain at Rome as long as possible, flattering himself that, little as Buonaparte cared either for considerations of religion or the rights of princes who could not support them with an army, even he would shrink from infringing the privileges of the Pope, and violating the sacred territory of the Church.<sup>1</sup> But, in order to be prepared beforehand for any emergency, he applied to the Court of Vienna for an asylum in the event of his finding himself compelled to quit Rome. Near as was the relationship which bound them together, the Emperor of Austria felt himself unable to afford the fugitive prince efficient protection, and was compelled to decline receiving him. And Louis, grieved rather

<sup>1</sup> "Ce ne sera qu'à l'extrémité que Sa Majesté se résoudra à abandonner ce séjour, dans l'espoir surtout que l'horreur qu'inspirerait à tous les souverains et à tous les peuples la violation d'un asyle sacré, fondé sur le droit des gens, éloignera le Premier Consul de se porter à cet extrême : quoiqu'il soit possible, d'un autre côté, qu'on doit s'attendre à tout d'un Gouvernement immoral." (Letter of Count Rossi, chamberlain of Louis XVIII, date March 3d, a singular proof of the general belief in the utter lawlessness of Buonaparte's character, if it be remembered that it was written nearly three weeks before the death of the Duc d'Enghien. The entire letter, which is in cypher, is like others on the same subject in the Liverpool Papers.)

than surprised, then turned to the one Power which neither feared the as yet invincible French general, nor ever suffered any consideration to interfere with her proud privilege of sheltering all unfortunate princes. The Count de Front, who was his most trusted agent in England, applied to Lord Hawkesbury, who without hesitation expressed the willingness of his own royal master to extend the hospitality of any part of his dominions to his brother sovereign; and, as De Front thought Malta the most convenient place if Louis should be compelled to a sudden retreat, at once despatched orders to the authorities in that island to be on the watch for his arrival, and to receive him with all the honours due to his birth. For some weeks all the partisans of the Bourbons were in great anxiety for his safety; reports had reached the French Royalists that Buonaparte had some suspicions of what was in agitation, and had caused his uncle, who was a cardinal of the Roman Church, to insist on the Pope exerting his vigilance to prevent the departure of Louis; but, as no French ship dared to show itself in the Mediterranean while Nelson was watching Toulon, the Pope had no means of restraining the King's movements, save by the employment of actual force; and Louis was thus assured of a safe retreat and efficient protection if ever he might find himself in need of it.

Meanwhile both England and France were in a state of internal agitation. France, first, from the announcement of the discovery of an extensive conspiracy, which in all probability had no real existence, against the power, perhaps even the life, of the First Consul;<sup>1</sup> then from the murder

<sup>1</sup> Bourrienne, than whom few had better opportunities of information, altogether denies the existence of any conspiracy. According to him, Fouché by his secret agents induced Pichégu, Georges, and the rest to come to Paris, that he might make a merit with the First Consul of revealing the fact of their being there, and so procure, as he did, his own restoration to the office of chief of the police. But "Ces messieurs étaient venus sur le Continent, non pas pour conspirer contre la vie du Premier Consul, mais pour examiner l'état des choses, et pouvoir dire d'une manière certaine aux princes de la maison de



of the Duc d'Enghien, to which few even of Buonaparte's warmest admirers give any other name; and, last of all, from his movements to the attainment of the summit of his ambition, the imperial crown. England was unsettled, though in an inferior degree, from the conviction that was growing up on all sides that neither as a financier nor as director of the general policy of the kingdom at such a time was the Prime Minister equal to his office. Even his own colleagues were aware of his incapacity; and in the autumn of 1803 one or two changes were made in different departments, which did not strengthen the Cabinet as a whole, and left the principal evil untouched. But the urgent need of a strong Ministry was increased at the beginning of the next year, when the King had a return of his old mental complaint, and it seemed probable that it might become necessary to appoint a regency. Such a conjuncture increased the zeal of the Whigs to displace the whole Cabinet,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time led Pitt, on the King's recovery (for his illness did not last long), to show, for the first time, such a willingness to resume office

Bourbon ce qu'ils devoient penser," &c. &c. (*Mémoires*, v. 19, 284.)

The Count de Front, writing to Rossi (March 23d), says: "Comme vous verrez dans les gazettes françaises beaucoup d'inculpations contre Sa Majesté Britannique et ses ministres à l'égard de la conspiration qui a été découverte en France, . . . je crois devoir vous en dire mon opinion particulière, et c'est que le ministère anglais n'a eu aucune part quelconque dans le plan, vrai ou faux, de conspiration qui doit avoir été formé par une partie de ceux qui sont présentement en France; mais en même tems je n'ai aucun doute que si le Général Pichegru, ou quelqu'autre des principaux chefs, eût réussi à former un parti capable d'amener un autre ordre de choses en France, il aurait été puissamment secondé d'ici. Cela aurait été d'autant moins extraordinaire qu'on sait qu'il y a à Paris un Club de Révolutionnaires Irlandais, prêts à faire, avec le secours de la France, en Irlande, ce que ferait un parti soutenu par l'Angleterre en France."

<sup>1</sup> Lord Malmesbury says, "During the King's illness Opposition increased both in violence and numbers" (iv. 286); and Fox writes, "It makes him, the doctor *i.e.* Addington, more and more contemned every day; indeed the contempt, both with respect to the degree and the universality of it, is beyond what was ever known . . .;" and in another letter, "Let us first get rid of the doctor is my first principle of action." (*Lord Russell's Memorials of Fox*, iii. 244, iv. 24, &c.)



that he wrote to the King to explain his views on the state of the nation, and of the measures which ought to be adopted. He even himself brought forward one motion on the state of the navy, which, as he justified it by declaring that, "considering the extent of the danger that now threatened the kingdom, our means of repelling it by our naval efforts were more inadequate than at any former period," was a direct censure on the Administration. A proposal which he made a few weeks afterwards to increase the army of reserve, in direct opposition to the plan brought forward by the Minister, indicated the same conviction of the incompetency of Addington to fulfil the just expectations of those who felt the importance of the existing crisis. And his disapproval of Addington's financial schemes was even more positive.

In the fierce debates which took place in the House of Commons in the early part of the session the Prime Minister must have greatly missed the aid of Lord Hawkesbury, but in the House of Lords the Foreign Secretary fully confirmed the reputation he had previously earned, and showed himself competent to lead it by making far the ablest speech that was made in either House on the Volunteer Bill. Apart from the effectiveness of his arguments and the well-chosen neatness of his language, the facts which he stated were highly creditable to the public spirit of the nation, and calculated to inspire the most desponding with reliance on our resources. Though we had within the four seas the largest regular army of troops of the line and militia which had ever been assembled, more numerous by 40,000 men than had been serving only three years before, the threats of invasion had added to that great host no fewer than 330,000 volunteers; and, though attempts were made by the Opposition in both Houses to deny their efficiency, it was remarkable that those members who, as professional soldiers, were the most competent to judge of it, were those who spoke most highly of it, and who expressed the greatest confidence in the service which might be expected from such an armament.

The objections to this part of the Government scheme for the defence of the kingdom were certainly ill-founded. The public spirit which could enlist such a band of all ranks to stand forward voluntarily and gratuitously to undergo the fatigues and restraints of a military life, was in itself a feeling to be encouraged rather than repressed; and we may still look on it with a closer interest than attaches to many bygone measures, since the noble force thus assembled, prodigious as it was, if the population of the kingdom at the time be considered, was the father of the magnificent army which now voluntarily musters in every county, and which, by rendering any attempt to invade Britain as desperate as it was felt to be then, has already at least once had a powerful influence in preventing the interruption of peace, and has thus earned the gratitude of Europe at large, as well as the admiration and attachment of its countrymen.

But though on this subject the plan of the Government was both judicious and successful, for their bill was carried by great majorities in both Houses, Addington saw clearly that he could no longer hold his ground as Prime Minister. The attacks upon his Administration, proceeding sometimes from Pitt and his adherents, sometimes from the Whig side of the House, became more frequent, and the divisions on them grew less and less favorable. In those days, for a Cabinet not to be supported by a large majority was regarded as a defeat, and on more than one occasion in the course of April the supporters of the Administration scarcely outnumbered its opponents by more than twenty. Fox had given notice of a motion on the defence of the country for the 23d of April, and on the 17th, the day after the majority for the Government had dwindled on a question relating to the Irish militia to twenty-one, Addington opened a negotiation with Pitt, sending a message to him to ask whether he was willing to communicate his opinion concerning the existing state of affairs, and the best mode of carrying on the government. Pitt, as he replied, did not think it consistent with his respect for the King to

express views tending to a change in his Majesty's Government to any one but the King himself, nor to volunteer them to the King ; but he added that, if his Majesty should desire him to do so, he was quite prepared to state his feelings on every matter of public policy without delay. And having, we may suppose, received such an intimation from his royal master, a day or two afterwards he addressed a letter to his Majesty, explaining his own past conduct towards the Administration, and the motives which had actuated him ; and this letter was followed by another, nominally addressed to the Lord Chancellor, but in reality also to the King, since it was to be laid before his Majesty, in which he indicated his notion of the general line of policy to be pursued on the leading questions of interest, and also his views of the principles on which a new Administration should be formed.

On the first subject (since Pitt fully observed his promise made three years before, to waive all mention of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics) there was probably no difference of opinion between him and his royal master, but on the second they were not equally well agreed. Pitt had expressed his conviction that it was "more important than perhaps at any former period in the history of the kingdom to give the greatest possible strength and energy to the Government, by uniting in the King's service as large a proportion as possible of the weight of talents and connexions, drawn, without exception, from parties of all descriptions, and without reference to former differences and divisions. He saw reason to hope that the circumstances of the time were peculiarly favorable to such an union, and that it might now be possible, with his Majesty's gracious approbation, to bring all persons of leading influence, either in Parliament or the country, to concur heartily in a general system formed for the purpose of extricating the country from its present difficulties, and endeavouring, if possible, to rescue Europe from the state to which it was reduced." And he especially named Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville as members of the Opposition, to

which he had never considered himself to belong, whom he thought it particularly desirable to include in a new Administration. Both were especially unpalatable to the King. With respect to Lord Grenville, in his reply to Pitt's letter George III. declared that that nobleman had strongly allied himself with the Roman Catholics (subsequent events proved how well founded this statement was), and mentioned also his political obstinacy. But his feelings towards Mr. Fox were even more bitter. He recalled "the whole tenor of Mr. Fox's conduct" since the days of Lord North, the necessity which had arisen for his expulsion from the Privy Council, and "expressed his astonishment that Mr. Pitt should for one moment have harboured the thought of bringing such a man before his royal notice." He added a hope that, "so far as the public service would permit, he might have the benefit of the further services of the majority of Addington's colleagues." Pitt, therefore, was precluded from availing himself of the co-operation which Fox was willing to afford him. For once in his life Fox behaved with magnanimity and a freedom from party spirit, and endeavoured to prevail on the ablest of those whom he looked on as his personal adherents to join the new Ministry. Grenville's conduct was different. As to him, the King withdrew his prohibition; on which, as if to show his own sense of his own importance, Grenville refused to take office in an Administration formed on a principle of exclusion; of the exclusion, that is to say, of Fox, to whom till within the last few months he had been fiercely opposed during the whole of his public life. It is absolutely impossible to justify this refusal. In one sense every Government must be formed on a principle of exclusion: of the exclusion, that is, of those whose views of policy differ from those of the intended Cabinet; and, though rejection by the Sovereign on personal grounds is certainly a different thing, yet it was impossible to deny that George III. had sufficient reasons to justify his decision both in Fox's general conduct, and especially in the language in which that statesman and his companions

habitually indulged respecting himself. It was even more unquestionable that Grenville was one of the last persons in the kingdom in whom a desire for Fox's co-operation could at that time have been expected, or who was entitled to demand it. Nor indeed, though the willingness to unite with Fox on this occasion was undoubtedly an instance of the sincerity of Pitt's patriotism, can it be looked on as equally a proof of the soundness of his judgment. For the coalition of 1782, though far less indefensible on the part of Lord North than in Fox, had certainly in some degree damaged the elder statesman's reputation also: and a repetition of such a step now would have compelled Pitt to concessions scarcely inferior to those to which his predecessor had consented. Such an union could only have worked well by both parties postponing every question of domestic policy, and agreeing to concentrate the whole energies of the Government and the country on the prosecution of the war. And such a postponement might plausibly have been represented, as in some quarters it certainly would have been represented, as a subordination of political principle to a desire for office. This, as we shall presently see, was the opinion entertained by Lord Hawkesbury.<sup>1</sup> But it was not that held by Grenville; and his refusal to rejoin his old colleagues, because the idea of a coalition with their old antagonist was abandoned, was defensible on no ground of either precedent or principle. The truth would seem to be that he had adopted the idea that neither Pitt nor the King could do without him. Pitt, however, was as proud as himself, and with better reason; he resolved to show him that he could dispense with his aid; and when, at the beginning of May, Addington formally resigned office, he carried out the King's wishes by selecting his colleagues mainly from among those who had been members of Addington's and of his own former administration.

It was almost a matter of course that Lord Hawkesbury continued a Secretary of State, but he did not remain in his old post. Pitt had hoped to secure the assistance

<sup>1</sup> *Vide infra*, p. 201.

of Lord Moira, who, besides that he was himself a man of considerable ability, was of special importance from his intimacy with and influence over the Prince of Wales; and, as no place seemed so suited to his abilities as the Foreign Office, to strengthen the Ministry Lord Hawkesbury consented to give it up, it being at first settled that he should instead take the management of war and the colonies.<sup>1</sup> But, as the arrangements went on, he was ultimately transferred to the Home Office, chiefly, it seems probable, because, according to the usage of that day, when the Prime Minister was a commoner, the Home Secretary, if a peer, was the leader of the Upper House, and partly to comply with the fancy of the King himself, who desired such an arrangement, alleging as his reason that the Home Secretary was the officer with whom, next to the Prime Minister himself, he was brought into the most frequent contact, and that there was no one with whom he found it so pleasant to transact business as Lord Hawkesbury. As far as personal feelings were concerned, Lord Hawkesbury would have preferred remaining where he was; but he knew that, in the formation of a new Ministry, it is often necessary to make sacrifices. And some of the reasons for which the change was proposed were, as we have seen, of a nature so complimentary and gratifying as greatly to contribute to reconcile him to it, though, as matters were eventually settled, the motive which had originally suggested any change at all, disappeared; since Lord Moira, after a good deal of vacillation, declined joining the Ministry: and the seals of the Foreign Office were given to Lord Harrowby.

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that in the very copious narrative of these transactions contained in Lord Liverpool's letters, which will be given a few pages further on, this appointment is not mentioned; but among the Liverpool Papers I find the following note.

"St. James's Palace, May 13th, 1804.

"The King desires Lord Hawkesbury's attendance here at four this day, to take the custody of the seals of the Colonial Department."

## CHAPTER V.

Lord Liverpool's account of the formation of Pitt's second Administration—Canning's attack on Lord Hawkesbury—They are reconciled—The Additional Force Bill—A new Corn Bill—Lord Hawkesbury's views of Free Trade—Disputes in the royal family—Trades Unions—Rise of Mr. O'Connell—Lord Hawkesbury's advice to the Roman Catholics—Reconciliation of Pitt and Addington—The attack on the Spanish treasure-ships—Napoleon's letter to George III.—Alliance with Austria and Russia.

THE whole of the details relating to the formation of the new Administration<sup>1</sup> have been narrated before by different writers, and of course from different points of view; but, as the truth is only to be arrived at by the comparison

<sup>1</sup> The new Ministry was eventually composed of the following members :—

First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of Exchequer, Mr. PITT.

Lord Chancellor, Lord ELDON.

Lord President, Duke of PORTLAND.

Lord Privy Seal, Earl of WESTMORELAND.

Home Secretary, Lord HAWKESBURY.

Foreign Secretary, Earl of HARROWBY.

Colonial Secretary, Earl of CAMDEN.

First Lord of Admiralty, Lord MELVILLE.

President of Board of Control, Lord CASTLEREAGH.

Master of the Ordnance, Earl of CHATHAM.

President of Board of Trade, Duke of MONTROSE.

Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, Earl MULGRAVE.

Lord Castlereagh being the only member of the House of Commons besides Pitt himself in the Cabinet. But Canning, whose great eloquence was becoming generally acknowledged, was Treasurer of the Navy; and one of the new secretaries of the Treasury was a man who subsequently obtained the highest reputation for his thorough knowledge of all commercial and financial subjects, Mr. W. Huskisson.



of as many accounts as possible, provided they proceed from persons in a position to acquire accurate knowledge, I will add here a relation of the whole circumstances, contained in three letters from Lord Liverpool to his cousin, Dr. Cornwall, bishop of Hereford, which, as the writer's information was of course derived in great part from his son, may be very nearly taken as the account of Lord Hawkesbury himself.

Addiscombe Place, July 8th, 1804.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have now been in the country about two months. I have seen here very few people ; I have not even seen Hawkesbury but twice. When I left London, Administration was changing, and it has since been changed. I have learned, however, authentically, the principal events that have passed ; and I mean now, in the course of two or three letters, to send you an account of these transactions ; and I do it at the desire, and with the approbation, of Lord Hawkesbury.

Mr. Pitt made himself the instrument of producing a change in the Administration ; for this purpose he wrote letters to the King, which I have seen. His only charge against the late Administration was weakness and imbecility. He did not state a single fact in proof of it, nor has a single fact been brought forward in either House of Parliament, or even in public conversation. The majority in either House was not great, but full as great in the House of Commons as Mr. Pitt had upon his Defence Bill. Mr. Addington and his colleagues thought fit, however, to give way, and some persons of importance think them wise in doing so. The King offered Mr. Addington an earldom and a pension of 4,000*l.* a year, which he refused, though pressed to accept these favours by the King and others. In the meantime a Court intrigue was going on. The Queen and the Duke of York were in open hostility with the Prince of Wales, and had no intercourse whatever. The dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge attached themselves to the Duke of York, the Duke of Clarence to the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Kent acted a doubtful part between them. The Queen and Duke of York were apprehensive that the Adminis-

tration which then existed was not sufficient to support them, in case of events, against the heir apparent, and wished therefore that it should be strengthened, particularly by Mr. Pitt. They therefore contributed to bring about the change, though the King was always firm in support of Mr. Addington.

The state of the King's health was then, and continues to be, precarious; according to the physicians, his bodily health is such as to promise a long life, and they are of opinion they shall cure him of any mental derangement, if he will comply with what they shall advise. The notes which he writes (of which I have seen a great number) are not only wise and discreet, but excellent. His conversation, also, and behaviour are perfectly good when he is in the company of those for whom he feels any respect. But when he gets into the company of the female part of his family, or among his servants in the stables, his conversation is not certainly such as it ought to be; and he marked this particularly in the only visit he has paid to Windsor; so that he is to go there no more, and I believe he will live principally at Kew. He has promised to conform to the rules prescribed by the physicians, and I incline to think he will now do so.

On the other hand, the Prince of Wales has never seen his father, mother, sisters, or brothers, that are attached to that part of the royal family. He obtains, however, information of what passes amongst them, as is supposed, through the Duke of Kent, and probably through other quarters. He declares himself in direct hostility to the Government that has been formed, and, by way of making friends, gives great dinners to all that he thinks may be gained. He professes that he will not take a temporary regency, but that he must have it for good, and without limitation, if he has it at all. He propagates unfavorable accounts of his father's health, and calls upon certain persons now in power, even by letter, not to trust to the reports of physicians alone, but to bring the business before Parliament. He is, as I take it, very much in the hands of Lord Moira and Mr. Fox; but I do not think that any of the others, though they wish to avail themselves of his influence for the destruction of those who are now in power, are much connected with him.

I now revert to Mr. Pitt. This gentleman proposed to form an

Administration of all the parties that assisted in the two Houses of Parliament, excluding Mr. Addington. He has had some personal quarrel with the person last mentioned. The secret is supposed to be in the hands of Mr. Steele,<sup>1</sup> and perhaps of a few others. I am totally unacquainted with it. Mr. Addington told me expressly he never would disclose it. Mr. Pitt proposed with earnestness that Mr. Fox, as well as others, should be taken in the Administration. I doubt whether he was ever sincere, or indeed thought that an Administration could be formed in which Mr. Fox and the others could bear a part. The King firmly rejected Mr. Fox, to which Mr. Pitt at last gave way, insisting, however, on taking in Lord Grenville. The King, though disinclined to his lordship, acquiesced. Mr. Pitt went then to Lord Grenville, and made the proposition to him. Lord Grenville would not consent to become a part of an Administration from which Mr. Fox and his friends were excluded. He confirmed this determination by a letter which you must have seen in the newspapers. Mr. Pitt then took the resolution of forming an Administration of his own friends, and of such of the late Administration as he approved of.

In my next letter I will send you an account of the share which Lord Hawkesbury has had in this transaction, and I shall afterwards convey to you some curious anecdotes, which it is proper you should know. I have the pleasure to tell you that my health continues full as well, perhaps rather better, than it was when you saw me in London.

All the family desire their best compliments to you and your family.

I am, with sincere regard, my dear Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful Servant,

LIVERPOOL.

MY DEAR LORD,

In my last letter I promised to give your Lordship an account of the share which Lord Hawkesbury had in the late change in the Administration. When Mr. Pitt determined to form an Administration out of his own friends and of a certain number of Mr. Addington's coadjutors, he sent Mr. Charles Long to Lord Hawkesbury to propose a meeting with him. At this

<sup>1</sup> Secretary to the Treasury.

conference Mr. Pitt said that Lord Hawkesbury was to continue Secretary of State, but asked him if he would have any objection to change his department if Lord Moira could be gained, and he should prefer to have the Foreign Department. Lord Hawkesbury, who is attached to this department, and the members of which were much attached to him, objected, and stated his objections, but at last gave way if Lord Moira could be gained. When Lord Hawkesbury told me of this, I did not much object to the consent he had given if the change was founded on the acquisition of such a person as Lord Moira, who, from his connexion with the Prince, was of great importance. The experiment was tried, by letters written to Lord Moira, but it wholly failed. Mr. Pitt then saw Lord Hawkesbury again, and said that he could not bring Lord Harrowby into his Cabinet unless he made him Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, for his health was so infirm that he could not execute any other, and that Lord Hawkesbury must continue to have the management of the House of Lords. Mr. Pitt assigned no other reason. Lord Hawkesbury again objected as before, but in the end acquiesced, for the reason stated to him. When Lord Hawkesbury acquainted me with this, I expressed great dissatisfaction, for I did not think that Lord Harrowby was a man either of the importance, the talents, or the knowledge of business, that Lord Hawkesbury was to leave his office merely for his lordship's accommodation. The point, however, had been decided, and nothing further could be said. I had, in truth, some presentiment of what afterwards happened. Lord Hawkesbury went, however, into the Home Department. The King was, I am persuaded, informed of the sentiments which I entertained on this subject, and on this account he first conveyed to me, through Sir Joseph Banks, that he preferred having Lord Hawkesbury in his new situation; that he thought it a situation of more importance, and that it brought him more frequently into his Majesty's presence, so that he should be more nearly connected with him. Shortly after this, his Majesty further marked his confidence in me, and his wish to reconcile me to the change, by sending me all the correspondence which had passed between Mr. Pitt and others, in consequence of this change of Administration; and I had reason

to conjecture that the King placed very great personal confidence in Lord Hawkesbury.

Before I proceed, it is necessary I should observe that Lord Hawkesbury insisted with Mr. Pitt on preserving his friend Mr. Wallace in the office he then held, whom Mr. Pitt intended to dismiss, from personal impressions against him made by Mr. Canning and others. This act of friendship on the part of Lord Hawkesbury stirred up against him the enmity of many of the little persons who environ and influence Mr. Pitt. Lord Hawkesbury was the means of preserving Lord Westmoreland, whom Mr. Pitt wished to dismiss, notwithstanding the long personal friendship which had existed between them. I believe that Hawkesbury performed this office in compliance with the wishes of the King.

When it was known that Mr. Wallace was to be continued in office, Mr. Canning and his little connexions began to spread unfavorable reports to Lord Hawkesbury; and when the Defence Bill came to be debated, Mr. Canning made use of expressions in the House of Commons of a very hostile nature to Lord Hawkesbury. It was evident that every word of his speech was prepared. It was replied to by several, particularly by Mr. Bragge, who told Mr. Canning that he had first been introduced into business by Lord Hawkesbury, that he now enjoyed one of the most profitable offices<sup>1</sup> under Government in consequence of that introduction, and yet he had thought fit unjustly to censure Lord Hawkesbury. Mr. Canning did not deny this fact or say a word in reply. Even Mr. Pitt was so sensible of the offence which had been given that he endeavoured to bring Mr. Canning to an explanation, but without success, and Mr. Pitt said himself what was not in fact true. He concealed the real motive of the change, as stated by himself to Lord Hawkesbury, and assigned another reason for it.

Lord Hawkesbury, very much offended with the whole of this transaction, took four-and-twenty hours to consider what he should do. After full deliberation, Lord Hawkesbury wrote a letter on the twentieth of last month to Mr. Pitt, resigning his

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning, who had been Under-Secretary of State in Pitt's first Administration, was Treasurer of the Navy in this his second Ministry.

office as Secretary of State, assigning as his reasons for it what I have already stated, and which I need not therefore repeat, but professing in the strongest terms his personal attachment to the King. Mr. Pitt immediately replied to this letter, and tried to diminish the offence which had been given, but begged of Lord Hawkesbury not to proceed, or say a word of this transaction, till he had had a conference with him, expressing in strong terms how sensible he was of the mischief that would be done to the existing Administration if any knowledge should get abroad of what had passed on this occasion. The next day Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Pitt had a conference, in which, after a long discussion, and much art on the part of Mr. Pitt, Lord Hawkesbury continued firm; and then Mr. Pitt offered to remove the person who had been the occasion of what had passed in the House of Commons relative to himself if he made a *point* of it. Lord Hawkesbury took a day to consider of this, when he returned for answer that he would not suffer that any one should be dismissed, or even resign his office, on his account. But after having stated to Mr. Pitt, in very clear and explicit but temperate terms, the impropriety of his own language, he required that Mr. Pitt should take some opportunity of stating the real truth of what had passed between them when he consented to change his situation; viz. that he gave his consent merely for personal accommodation. Mr. Pitt in answer promised to do what Lord Hawkesbury insisted on if an occasion should offer, and expressed in strong terms his opinion of the talents and abilities of Lord Hawkesbury, and his most sincere and earnest desire that they might act together on the most cordial footing of political confidence and personal friendship. When Lord Hawkesbury sent his letter to me, I advised him to be satisfied, and everything is going on well ever since. There are, however, some other little anecdotes, which I shall make the subject of another letter; but I shall not be able to write to you for a day or two, as Mr. Lock is going to leave me.

I am, with the sincerest regard, my dear Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful Servant,

LIVERPOOL.



Addiscombe Place, 16th July, 1804.

MY DEAR LORD,

Previous to what passed as related in the latter part of my last letter, Lord Hawkesbury had told me that Mr. Canning's influence over Mr. Pitt was greatly diminished; but when this gentleman heard of Lord Hawkesbury's resolution to resign, he appears to have been very much alarmed. He came three times to seek Lord Hawkesbury, who twice refused to see him; the third time he forced himself upon him. I am informed, from Mr. Canning's own account, Lord Hawkesbury treated him very coldly; he made many apologies, denying his intention to give any offence. At length Mr. Canning offered to resign his office if Lord Hawkesbury required it. Lord Hawkesbury was then more civil to him, but dismissed him without any assurance, but returned his answer in the letter he afterwards wrote to Mr. Pitt, in which, as I said before, he declared that he would not suffer any one to resign on his account. I am assured that Mr. Canning and all his little squad are in very low spirits, and it is certain that Mr. Pitt has never told the whole of what passed to any of these gentlemen. I think it is probable that they will work in every way they can to the prejudice of my son: whether they will succeed it is impossible to foretell; but I think he acts perfectly right in setting them at defiance. He must destroy their influence, or they must destroy him.

I have thus given your Lordship a short history of the late change in the Administration, and of some incidents that have occurred in consequence thereof. The late Administration were charged with imbecility, and yet, neither in Mr. Pitt's letters to the King, nor in any speech or proceeding in either House of Parliament, has any one single act of imbecility been imputed to them, or any charge brought against them. This is a most extraordinary circumstance. If we compare the individuals of which the late Administration was composed with those of the present, we shall find the present much weaker than the preceding one, except in the single case of Mr. Pitt. He certainly is, in oratory at least, superior to Mr. Addington. Lord Melville is certainly not a better First Lord of the Admiralty



in public estimation than Lord St. Vincent ; and no one of the new members of the present Administration can be compared to Mr. Yorke as a man of business. The Duke of Montrose, Lord Camden, and Lord Mulgrave are wretched indeed. Lord Harrowby has some parts, but the weakness of his mind, and the consequent weakness of his health, almost disqualify him for a man of business, and still more for a speaker. Mr. Pitt has not a single member in the House of Commons qualified to give him material support in debate ; while he has to contend with opponents distinguished by talents of every description : Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham, Mr. Tierney, and others. There are other circumstances which may put an end to his Administration. The King's health is precarious, and even that of Mr. Pitt disqualifies him from taking so vigorous and active a part as he did when he was before in the same situation ; his popularity has also much declined, particularly in the western and northern parts of England. And, though he has some zealous friends among the merchants of the City, the enthusiasm which once prevailed shows itself no longer in his favour. If the King's health was to decline, and the Prince of Wales to become regent, Mr. Fox, in conjunction with Lord Moira, will become the efficient ministers. If Mr. Pitt's health was to decline so as to prevent his continuing in office, Mr. Addington would be his successor, and return to his former situation. He has risen, since he retired, very much in public estimation ; and, in truth, men of his character will always recover the good opinion of the public when they are out of office, though they are neither praised nor sufficiently respected as long as they retain their power. He is calm, sensible, cautious, and has shown himself of late to be very disinterested, though he has in fact but 2,200*l.* a year to live on, except the office he gave his son, and he will give no offence by the conduct he will hold while he may be said to be in opposition. The Grenville party, though it contains some men of ability, is not very numerous, and the persons of which it consists are universally unpopular. The heads of this party are considered by every one as violent in their principles, and to the last degree selfish.

I have thus, my dear Lord, opened to you the whole of my

sentiments on the present state of affairs. Hawkesbury is in perfect health and spirits.

I am, with sincere regard,

Your Lordship's faithful Servant,

LIVERPOOL

It will here be seen that in one of these letters is a brief mention of a disagreement with one of the subordinate, but very important, members of the Ministry. The new Treasurer of the Navy, Canning, was a man of pre-eminent ability, of clear judgment, of rapid decision, of large and liberal views, and of an eloquence second only on his side of the House to that of Pitt himself. He was also connected by terms of close intimacy with Lord Hawkesbury. Their friendship, as has been already mentioned, had commenced at Oxford, and they had since been connected by parliamentary and official intercourse, Canning having been Under-Secretary of State during the latter years of Pitt's first Ministry. When, on Pitt's resignation, Lord Hawkesbury was raised to Cabinet office, Addington would gladly have secured the assistance of Canning also; but he entertained a strong opinion on the propriety of removing the restrictions from the Roman Catholics, and followed Pitt into retirement, though Pitt, rating service to the country more highly than a show of personal attachment to himself, strongly advised, and even entreated, him to continue at his post. He, however, persisted in his resignation: but, though thus far proclaiming his resolution to act on Pitt's example rather than by his advice, he was far from imitating him in his subsequent conduct. During the whole of Addington's government, he was its most unwearied and versatile opponent, attacking both Administration and Minister with speeches in and lampoons out of the House; and descending, on at least one occasion, to something too like treachery and intrigue, to induce Pitt to take measures to withdraw his support from the Ministry, and to overthrow it before he had seen any reason to be dissatisfied with its proceedings. The truth was that Canning had

one great fault during the early part of his career, though, seeing how it had marred both his usefulness to his country and his personal advancement, he afterwards had the good sense to cure himself of it. The fault was an extreme restlessness. Conscious of the possession of great powers, he was inclined to deny the credit of any ability to those who came into competition with him, to disapprove of everything which he had no share in doing. Accordingly, although it would be doing him great injustice to compare him, as to expansion of mind and lofty designs, with Lord Grenville, yet in respect of the first transactions of the Government which he had refused to join, he followed the guidance of his former chief at the Foreign Office rather than the wiser, better-tempered, and more self-denying judgment of Pitt. He denounced the peace publicly and privately, professing to regard it as the arrangement of Addington himself, not of "Hawkesbury, who had merely held the pen,"<sup>1</sup> and as in itself justifying his unwillingness to serve under such a principal. And now, when he had returned to office under Pitt, he could not restrain himself from not only still aiming his sarcasms at his predecessors, but even from assuming that Pitt so fully agreed with, and so completely deferred to the objections which he had formerly made to the Peace of Amiens (though, as has been seen, Pitt publicly supported and privately approved of it), that the change which had been made in the department of the Foreign Office had been adopted in consequence of those objections; and, in the debate on the Additional Force Bill in the middle of June, he affirmed, by way of vindicating his own consistency on now taking office with so many colleagues who had been members of the previous Ministry, that there was a great and general change of system. Especially had it been changed in those points on which Addington's measures had been unsatisfactory to himself, and in the front he placed the foreign policy.

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to Lord Boringdon, October 29th, 1801, in "George Canning and his Times," p. 69.

"I objected," said he, "to the administration of foreign affairs: that has been changed;" giving additional sting to the assertion by his next sentence: "I objected to the naval administration: that has been changed;" the want of energy and vigilance in the naval department having been, as we have seen, selected by Pitt himself as the most prominent object for censure.

Such a statement was well calculated to arouse Lord Hawkesbury's indignation. He looked on it as tantamount to an assertion that the speaker had not consented to take even an office which did not give a seat in the Cabinet without stipulating for such a change in our foreign policy as required the removal of the former Foreign Secretary; and that that removal had therefore been caused by the Prime Minister's acquiescence in the propriety of that change. Canning afterwards disclaimed in the strongest manner any intention of conveying such a notion, but the comments made on his language, as soon as he sat down, by Sheridan and others, showed that Lord Hawkesbury was not unwarranted in the interpretation which he put on it. Nay, Pitt himself must have regarded it in the same light; so pointedly, in the course of his own speech, delivered at a later hour of the same evening, did he allude to Canning's expressions, and so carefully did he give a different colour to the recent arrangements. "There was not the slightest ground," he affirmed, "for imagining that a noble friend of his, whom he had always esteemed and loved, was degraded by taking the Home instead of the Foreign Department, though he confessed that there were some parts of the foreign system which he did not approve, of which it was not necessary to say more. Those who knew the circumstances knew how far that change was from any motive that could infer degradation." Nor did he forbear to administer a sharp rebuke to him whose (to say the least) unguarded language had made it necessary for him to allude to the subject at all. "Indeed he could not see in what view such a thing could be mentioned at all, unless it were for the purpose

of sowing jealousies and dissensions among the present ministers; and as such it deserved his severest animadversion."

Angry, however, as Lord Hawkesbury was, with his habitual self-command he determined (as he wrote word to Lord Liverpool) "to take no step in the business till after twenty-four hours' consideration." But at the end of that time he wrote to the Prime Minister himself, reminding him that "the change from the Foreign to the Home Department had been proposed by Pitt *solely* on the ground of *personal* accommodation. That he himself had plainly declared it to be contrary to his own wishes and feelings, which, however, he was willing to sacrifice for the convenience of Pitt himself in making his arrangements; and that from the first he had been fully aware of the construction which would be given to this transaction in the world, and of the advantage which any Opposition might be expected to take of it. These consequences he had then been prepared to disregard. But now, after this construction had been publicly sanctioned by a member of the Government supposed to possess a considerable share of Pitt's personal confidence, he felt that, consistently with what he owed to his own honour and reputation, he could no longer continue a member of the Government." He added also, as a proof that he was not deciding too hastily, or under the impulse of annoyance at a single expression, which might not mean so much as it seemed to convey, that he knew that "the imputation thus publicly made had been circulated from the same quarter for some time past in private society." At the same time he assured Pitt that his withdrawal from office should make no difference in his resolution to give all possible support to his Government. Pitt's reply would have been amply satisfactory to any one who was not rendered peculiarly sensitive by a feeling of wounded honour. He declared that "it was scarcely possible that any circumstance could arise which on every personal account could give him individually more pain."

And in this he was undoubtedly sincere ; for, as has been already mentioned, in the first arrangement of Addington's Cabinet he had singled Lord Hawkesbury out for especial commendation. He pointed out how promptly and decidedly he had himself alluded to the subject in order to efface the construction which others showed an inclination to put on Canning's words. And he corroborated most fully Lord Hawkesbury's own statement that the recent changes "had been proposed and acceded to solely on the ground of personal accommodation." He did more. For when Canning, who had neither wished nor expected his words to be taken so seriously, and who, when he learnt what deep offence he had given, expressed to Lord Hawkesbury and to Pitt his desire rather to resign his own place than to embarrass the Government by allowing Lord Hawkesbury to retire, Pitt, without at all concealing how useful Canning's aid was to himself in the House of Commons, declared that, if he were driven to such an alternative, he must accept his resignation rather than that of Lord Hawkesbury.

Such a declaration, while it was only just, inasmuch as Canning was certainly the offender in the dispute, and only in accordance with what Lord Hawkesbury was entitled to by his seat in the Cabinet, a rank to which Canning had not yet risen, was also in itself so high and practical a compliment and proof of the value the Prime Minister set upon his services, that, as we have seen in his father's letters to Bishop Cornwall, he consented to withdraw his resignation. In the winter the matter was for a moment re-opened by the mischief-making tattle of officious friends on both sides, but was speedily set at rest by candid personal explanations and the judicious mediation of a common friend, Lord Morpeth. Of course the outline, though not the details, of what had taken place was generally known, and the anticipations which Lord Hawkesbury expressed to his father when he first communicated to him his resignation of his office, that "so far as it was a personal



question, what had happened would not turn to his disadvantage in the eyes of the world," was verified ; for the world in general, and especially the world of politicians, looks with favour on a man who is prompt to vindicate his own honour, so long as his conduct in vindicating it is marked with forbearance and good temper. And in another way the transaction redounds to the credit of both, of Canning as well as of Lord Hawkesbury. For it is only with men of really fine and generous dispositions that a reconciliation, after a dispute of so serious a kind, can be so complete as to leave no soreness behind it. But it was such in this instance. They at once returned to their former habits of cordial intimacy : which was never again interrupted. Even their difference on the question which, after the termination of the war, was, till its final settlement, the cardinal point of domestic politics, led to no diminution of their personal regard for each other. And on all other points, as no one could better appreciate the brilliancy of Canning's genius or the soundness of his views than his old friend and colleague, so no one could exceed Canning in the frankness and warmth with which he at all times acknowledged the assistance that he derived in carrying out those views from his confidence in the steady support and straightforward advocacy which he was sure to receive from the Prime Minister.

Before his resumption of office Pitt, as we have seen, had shown his dissatisfaction with the measures, both naval and military, which had been adopted for the further prosecution of the war. One of the first bills which, still under the influence of this feeling, he introduced as minister was that known as the "Additional Force Bill ;" by which he hoped to remove the difficulties which had lately been found to impede the recruiting for the regular army, and to augment the army of reserve, which hitherto had never reached the number intended. And he calculated on attaining both these objects by a reduction of the militia to its former amount, which of late had been greatly exceeded. The



bill was vehemently attacked not only by Fox, but also by Windham and Addington; but it passed the House of Commons by a majority of above 40. In the Upper House it encountered equally earnest opposition from Lord Grenville; from Lord Moira, who, as we have said, was closely connected with the Prince of Wales; from Lord Hobart, who had been one of Addington's Secretaries of State, and from others; but it was efficiently advocated by Lord Hawkesbury. His argument rested very mainly on the ground that the original establishment of the army of reserve having not only been a judicious, but also, as was proved by the results, an eminently successful measure, the present bill was in fact but a necessary correction of and supplement to it. In some points the former Act had been found to press both heavily and, what was worse, unequally on those whom it most affected. This bill redressed the inequalities, and removed the pressure. Lord Grenville had objected to it as unconstitutional, since it tended to establish a large standing army in time of peace. So old an argument, if indeed it could be called one at all, admitted of being easily disposed of by the most cursory reference to the length of time during which a standing army had been kept on foot in the kingdom. And it was evident that the principle was not affected by the number of men employed; but Lord Hawkesbury, moreover, contended and proved that the force to be established by the present bill was wholly free from any unconstitutional element, inasmuch as it would be as entirely under the control of Parliament as any description of force that could be conceived. Above all, he recommended the measure as one calculated to save us for the future from those embarrassments which hitherto had always crippled us at the commencement of a war, arising from the want of men.

His speech on the whole was so conclusive that the bill passed the House of Lords by a majority of 154 to 69, or more than two to one. And he was equally successful, or

even more so (since the opponents of the measure did not in this instance venture to divide at all), in persuading the House to agree to a bill for regulating the corn-trade; making the conditions under which grain might be exported or imported dependent on the average price of corn (for the year) in the maritime districts of the island. The object was stated by him in the House of Lords to be : " First to render the prices of corn steady, and to counteract, as far as legislation could effect it, the dangers and inconveniences of frequent fluctuation, with which their Lordships could not fail to be impressed when they recollected that within a few years the price of wheat had been on one occasion 43s. a quarter, and at another time had risen to the enormous price of 156s. ; and the other object aimed at was to encourage agriculture by adopting such measures as might afford the farmer a fair profit for his labour and capital." It is probable that, in advocating the measure, Lord Hawkesbury was in some degree yielding his own judgment to that of his colleagues, and that it may have been owing to this circumstance that his language was unusually guarded. " He would not," he said, " then go into an examination of the view urged by some of the most respectable and most enlightened men in the country, whether it would not be wiser to abstain from all legislation, and to leave the trade in corn as free as it was in any other commodity." And it is certain that, at a somewhat later period, when, in consequence of an apprehended scarcity of the potato crop in Ireland, the Secretary for Ireland, then Sir A. Wellesley, suggested a fresh, even if only a temporary, alteration of the law, not without some apparent anxiety for the adoption of his proposal, Lord Hawkesbury expressed to him a very decided opinion " of the difficulties which must arise from any interference of the Government or Legislature on the subject," as calculated " to derange trade, and give an impulse to unhealthy speculation." And in the re-arrangement of our financial and commercial

legislation, rendered necessary by the termination of the war, we shall find that he was a general advocate for the greatest abstinence from interference with trade and commerce that the complicated interests and established habits of a country like Great Britain seemed to permit. If not the earliest champion of free-trade, he was certainly the first who, with any of the responsibility of the Government on his shoulders, supported such a principle. And it was no idea taken up by him hastily, or on light grounds, but one to which he consistently adhered throughout his whole career, and the more steadily the more he had the power to give effect to it. Those who, in our own generation, lavish panegyrics not undeserved on the financial abilities displayed, and the financial and commercial reforms achieved, by Sir Robert Peel, should bear in mind that he imbibed the principles on which those reforms were founded from the statesman who introduced him into the Government. The giving the royal assent to the bill was the last act of the session. And the vacation, acceptable to all the ministers, was more welcome to none than to Lord Hawkesbury, who required leisure to make himself acquainted with the duties, and to enable him to grapple with the perplexities, of his new office.

And, if not so imposing in appearance as the labours of the Foreign Secretary, on whose management the maintenance of friendship and alliance with foreign Powers and the peace or war of the world often depended, they were equally multifarious, almost equally important at the moment, often even of more real and solid consequence, as being calculated to exert a more permanent influence on the internal policy of the kingdom and condition of the people. The very question of peace and war was not wholly unconnected with the Home Office at the time, from the expectation which generally prevailed that the first operation attempted by the enemy would be the invasion of this island; and much of Lord Hawkesbury's correspondence with the King during the recess of 1804 refers to the measures which

he would be required to take, in the event of any landing on our shores being effected, to preserve the tranquillity of the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Both his royal master and himself believed that the review which the new Emperor held at Boulogne in the middle of August, in honour of himself and his namesake, the new Saint Napoleon, whom he had just called into existence as a compliment to himself, was but a rehearsal of the grand attempt which was to follow immediately. But when, in a skirmish which took place before the end of the month under the eyes of Napoleon himself, the new Emperor found that a British frigate and three small sloops were sufficient to repel ninety of his brigs and gunboats, he became convinced that no flotilla of small vessels, however numerous, would be sufficient to protect his transports, and he adjourned the enterprise till the following year, when the plan of naval operations which he had formed would, he hoped, give him, at least for a time, the command of the Channel.

But, besides the possible chances of the war, questions of the gravest character were surrounding the Home Secretary on every side. In a country such as Britain, even the most private affairs of the royal family are not without an influence on public politics; and this had never been the case in a greater degree than during the present reign; nor perhaps ever so much in that as at the time of which we are speaking, when the eyes of the nation were directed to three generations at once, and the arrangements necessary for the education of the future heiress of the kingdom might affect the course of events for the greater part of the century. The King himself, as was not unnatural, conceived that he had, as sovereign, a right to the principal

<sup>1</sup> August 14th, two days before the review at Boulogne, Lord Hawkesbury writes to his father: "From intelligence which has lately reached us we are inclined to believe that the attempt of invasion will soon be made. Their preparations are very great; and they have stopped building, which looks as if they considered them complete. They have about 3,000 vessels of different descriptions, and 180,000 men between Ostend and Cherbourg."

voice in the settlement of those arrangements ; his right being certainly, in the general view, strengthened by the unhappy terms on which the parents of the young princess were living. And it was hardly possible for either of them to behave with greater impropriety than their conduct now displayed. The Prince made the most ostentatious parade of his differences with his father ; abstaining from attending the levee on his birthday, driving by the palace at the time as if on purpose to show that no cause but inclination kept him away ; afterwards, when he had agreed to wait on his father at Kew, changing his mind, and desiring to intimate his change of purpose by a message couched in terms so disrespectful that the chancellor refused to convey it. While the Princess of Wales, acting with more than usual flightiness, sent messages to those in charge of her daughter, in the King's name, of which he had no knowledge, and the obedience to which took him wholly by surprise, and threw him into great and dangerous agitation. However, after a discussion of some months the Prince gave way, in appearance at least ; and, though he still spoke most irreverently of his father in private society, and dwelt with the exaggeration of evident satisfaction on the infirm state of his mental health, he consented to allow him the sole and exclusive care of his daughter ; and the selection of her abode and of her different attendants and teachers was made by the King himself with great anxiety and most judicious discernment. Unhappily, the arrangement which was now concluded did not terminate all the differences in the royal family ; and when Lord Hawkesbury's interference was next called for, the necessity for it arose from disputes between the Prince and Princess which were still more distressing, because still more discreditable.

Another matter to which Lord Hawkesbury's attention was called in the autumn of this year was of a nature which at more than one subsequent period has attracted notice ; but never so much as lately, since the atrocities

to which the system of the Trades Unions is calculated to lead had never been fully comprehended till they were disclosed by the recent investigations.

In 1804 these unions were of recent growth, the first societies of the kind having been apparently established in imitation of the different political associations to which admiration of the principles of the French Revolution had given birth. But they had already grown to such a head, and the workmen had adopted steps to procure their objects which were so unquestionably illegal, that the masters, who saw every proper principle of trade attacked by them, and their own means of livelihood imperilled, petitioned the Home Secretary to take the matter into his own hands, and to institute a Government prosecution of the chief members of the Union. Lord Hawkesbury very naturally referred the petition to the Attorney-General, Mr. Perceval, celebrated afterwards as the only lawyer of professional eminence who, since the Revolution, has ever become Prime Minister. And the opinion which he received in reply is worth preserving, as probably the earliest pronounced by any lawyer or minister on a question which is now assuming such great importance.

October 5th, 1804.

MY LORD,

I have had the honour of receiving your Lordship's letter of the 22d ult., accompanied with several papers relative to the combination formed by the boot and shoe makers in the metropolis, which your Lordship thereby submitted to the consideration of the Solicitor-General and myself, who were requested to state an opinion as to the steps most proper to be taken thereon.

These papers contain a statement of a very extensive combination existing amongst the boot and shoe makers in the metropolis, who are in correspondence, by means of delegates, committees, and otherwise, with similar combinations, or rather branches of the same combination, in different parts of the kingdom. The system seems to be established upon the plan acted upon by the Corresponding Society, and other united Societies, which have been found to act with such mischievous



concert in England, Scotland, and Ireland, upon political points which were the objects of the union ; and there appears to be no doubt that the plan of the present combination is capable of being applied in support of any object to which they may be disposed to direct it. The present objects seem to be the increase of wages, some regulation with respect to the number of apprentices, and imposing an obligation upon the masters to employ no journeyman who, as not being a member of the combination, or refusing to comply with its rules and submit to its authority, has made himself obnoxious to its members. This latter object, it is plain, is immediately directed to the establishment of the strength of the society, by putting into their hands the means of compelling every journeyman in the trade, and, through the journeymen, every master in the trade, to submit to their terms under peril of ruin, by loss of employment to the journeymen, and loss of workmen to the masters. The general evidence of the existence of such a system seems to be very strong and convincing ; but it is not given with that detail and particularity with regard to individuals as to enable me to point out to your Lordship the persons whom (if it should be thought fit for Government to take it up as a subject on which they would direct a prosecution) it would be proper to select as objects of that prosecution. But the papers contain the offer of more information, and I think it may be reasonably concluded, from what they contain, that sufficiently particular information against individuals might be procured.

Upon the point of law, I have no difficulty in stating to your Lordship that the combination is illegal, and that the parties, if particularized by such evidence as I above suppose to be within reach of being procured, are liable to be prosecuted for a misdemeanour.

With respect to the policy of Government's instituting such a prosecution, my mind is in too great a degree of doubt to permit me to state any opinion, or to do more than to submit it to your Lordship and his Majesty's Government to determine it, suggesting some of the considerations which create my doubts. If the effect of prosecuting or not prosecuting by Government was to begin and end with this case alone, it perhaps might be



immaterial who carried on the prosecution. The source of evidence is opened to Government, and the public prosecutor would probably be able to procure sufficient evidence to convict. But as it will be viewed as a precedent of what the masters in this trade, and in others, will expect Government to do in future, it seems to me to deserve very serious consideration. For it is not only to be collected from these papers, but it is otherwise too notorious, that similar combinations exist in almost every trade in the kingdom. And if Government attends to this application on the part of the boot and shoe makers, similar applications must be expected from every other trade, and it will lead to an opinion that it is not the business of the masters of the trade, who feel the injury, to prosecute, but that it is the business of the Government. And it seems to admit of no doubt, but that either as regards the authority and weight of the masters, or the facility of securing evidence to prosecute with effect, such prosecutions had better be in the hands of the masters than of Government. It must be admitted, indeed, that the offence has grown to such a height, and such an extent, as to make it very discouraging for any individual to institute a prosecution ; as the persons whom he would prosecute would be supported at their trial, and during their imprisonment, by the contributions of their confederates, and his own shop would possibly be deserted by his workmen. But then it is clear that it is owing to the inertness and timidity of the masters that the conspiracy has reached this height, and it may well be feared that this inertness will be rather increased than diminished by the interference of Government. The same timidity which disposes each at present to wish to leave it to some other parties to prosecute, lest by prosecution they should lose their workmen, will dispose them to leave to others the equally, if not more, obnoxious duty of informing ; and when they once think the punishment of such offences to be the business of Government, they will think it also the business of Government to procure the evidence, and not theirs to give it ; so that the future detection and prosecution of such offences would probably be rendered more difficult. Besides, in all these cases there are always, whether well founded or not, complaints on both sides, and the

impartiality of Government would be awkwardly tested if, after undertaking a prosecution, at the instance of the masters, against the conspiracy of the journeymen, they were to be applied to on the part of the journeymen to prosecute the same masters for a conspiracy against their men.

These are some of the considerations which lead me to doubt whether it would or would not be politic to institute a prosecution by the public in this case ; and I take leave to submit them to your Lordship's better determination. Upon the illegality of this conspiracy I have had an opportunity of knowing that the Solicitor-General agrees with me, but not having been able to see him since I have read the papers myself, and being pressed by the persons who submitted these papers to your Lordship not to delay my opinion upon them, I have reflected upon the whole of the case without waiting to confer with the Solicitor-General upon the expediency of Government engaging in the prosecution.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,  
Your Lordship's most obedient, humble Servant,  
SP. PERCEVAL.

Mr. Perceval's opinion was, almost as a matter of course, acted on by his colleague who had invited it. Lord Hawkesbury declined to institute such a prosecution as had been requested. And the matter dropped for a time : the workmen abating some of their pretensions when they learnt (for the Attorney-General's opinion seems to have become known to the parties principally concerned) that their combination, carried out as they intended to carry it out, was such a violation of the law as might expose them to punishment.

In Ireland there were difficulties of a more serious nature: some affecting the political tranquillity of the island, and likely, in their complications, to involve that of Great Britain also; others affecting the character of the judicial bench and the administration of justice, on which hitherto no political agitation had even cast a suspicion. That at so unquiet a moment, when the insurrection that had just been quelled had inevitably left behind it a still

swelling under-current of discontent, libels should have been published on those concerned in the punishment of the rebels could hardly be unexpected. But, after the printer of one of the most virulent attacks on the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, and other high officers of the Crown had been brought to justice, it was found that the author of the libel was actually one of the judges. Even in Ireland so discreditable a state of things as now ensued had not previously been seen. Two of his colleagues so resented the conduct of which they believed a third to have been guilty that they refused to sit on the bench with him. The fourth took his part : one-half the Queen's Bench broke off all intercourse, both official and private, with the other half, and threats of actions at law for libel and slander were freely bandied between those who were appointed to be the dispensers of justice to others.

The question, too, which had broken up Pitt's former Ministry was revived, and that under the peculiarly embarrassing circumstance of those who brought it forward being men of deservedly high reputation and influence in Ireland. Lord Fingall, Lord Gormanstown, Sir Edward Bellew, and others, some country gentlemen, some merchants of affluence, and some barristers, among whom was one, Mr. Daniel O'Connell, who afterwards rose to great celebrity by his ultimately successful advocacy of the question, at the beginning of the year had formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of pressing on the Government the propriety of repealing the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, to which body they all belonged ; and they were now preparing a petition to be presented to both Houses of Parliament ; while at the very same time certain information reached the Government of a very extensive disaffection in the southern and western counties, and of a large party being in negotiation with the French to induce them to invade the island. The French were lavish of, and probably sincere in, their

promises to comply with the invitation : but it is remarkable that, according to the intelligence which was received by the ministers, they had resolved not again to try the western coast, where the misadventures of General Humbert and Commodore Bompart<sup>1</sup> were still fresh in their recollection ; but they proposed instead to venture up St. George's Channel, and, while a Dutch fleet sailed round towards the Donegal coast to draw off our attention to that quarter, to endeavour to land a force in the neighbourhood of Dublin and surprise the capital. Lord Hawkesbury failed, as we shall see hereafter, in his endeavours to induce the Roman Catholics to postpone their movement to a more favorable time. His advice may have been suspected, since his having held office in Addington's Ministry raised a presumption that he was opposed to the removal of the restrictions complained of. But when he urged upon them, as he was evidently authorised to do by the Prime Minister, that "whatever might be Pitt's opinion on the merits of the question itself, it would be impossible for him, *under the present circumstances*, to take any other line than that of resisting it to the utmost of his power, and that it was certain that any expectation of carrying the question at that time would be completely disappointed," it would have been wise of them to listen to him ; for he was acting rather as a friend than as an adversary when he argued that it was impolitic to a degree "little short of insanity for the Catholics to think of pressing their claims at that time, since the consequence would infallibly be that many persons would be committed against them who, under other circumstances, might come to a different conclusion ; but who, having once taken their line upon the question, might be disposed on that account ever after to adhere to it." He added : "The agitation of

<sup>1</sup> A few weeks after General Humbert's surrender, Commodore Bompart, with a squadron consisting of a ship of the line and eight frigates, having 3,000 men on board as a reinforcement for the general, had all his ships but two taken by a squadron under Sir J. B. Warren.

the question at this time may influence the opinions of many likewise on the merits of the question itself. It will impress them with a conviction of the *malus animus* of those who bring it forward, as the removal of the existing disabilities would not practically benefit ten persons in the whole country, and the conduct of the Catholics will appear to arise from a desire on their part either to embarrass Government by the agitation of the question at a most unseasonable time, or to make this measure, when carried, the foundation of further claims and pretensions of the most alarming nature to all who are attached to the existing constitution in Church and State.”<sup>1</sup>

If, in speaking of those who might be led to conceive an unfavorable impression of the objects of the Roman Catholics and their general loyalty to the constitution by their pertinacity in thus pressing their claims at this moment, he included himself; and if he, not having previously made up his mind on the principle, but being now compelled to make a sudden and hasty selection, was thus led to embrace that side of the question which was hostile to their emancipation, as it was subsequently called; it was indeed a most unfortunate mistake for themselves and for the kingdom at large which the Roman Catholics now committed. For in that case it seems probable that, by alienating one who subsequently enjoyed the chief power in the State for such a length of time, they eventually postponed the attainment of their demands, and kept the whole kingdom in a state of agitation for many years. A mistake of policy at this moment it undoubtedly was, because it can never be prudent to endeavour to push forward a claim at a time when circumstances render its success impossible. And Pitt’s repudiation of it, coupled with the motive which led to his taking that line, clearly showed that at

<sup>1</sup> These opinions are expressed in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant, written “to be made use of by him, as he might think proper, in his further communications with any members of the Catholic body.”

the moment concession was absolutely impracticable. The Roman Catholics indeed may in all candour be excused for disregarding the dictates of strict prudence on the subject, not only from their firm conviction of the reasonable and rightful character of their claims, but because it is undeniable that the Ministry which carried the Union had led them to expect an immediate recognition of them. So that they were smarting under the double injury of restriction and disappointment. But it is not so easy to acquit those politicians who in the next session of Parliament made themselves their organ; though they were as well aware as Pitt himself of the impossibility of obtaining the King's consent, and of the danger of agitating and unsettling his mind by pressing for it; and though one of them, when, a few months later, he found himself in Pitt's position, abandoned the advocacy of the question from the very same motive which had influenced that minister.

One cause of anxiety to both the Ministry and the nation was removed in the course of the winter by the thorough re-establishment of the King's health, to which his reconciliation with the Prince of Wales no doubt greatly contributed. In November the Prince visited his father at Windsor; and for the first time for many years the father and son slept under the same roof: though Lord Hawkesbury feared that it was but an apparent and temporary harmony, an apprehension in which the King himself coincided. Before the end of the year Lord Hawkesbury himself had the good fortune to be able to contribute further to the royal comfort, under circumstances very flattering to himself, and showing beyond all cavil or contradiction how very high his own character and influence stood with both the late and the present minister. In a letter to his father on the subject of the Catholic claims he had mentioned his belief that Lord Fingall and his party were secretly encouraged in the prosecution of them by the Grenvilles; and after discussing its probable bearing on the different parties in the State, and on the King's feelings towards



each, added, evidently from a wish that was father to the thought, that it might perhaps "bring Pitt and Addington again together."<sup>1</sup> To Lord Hawkesbury's mind it was, of course, no slight reason for desiring such a reconciliation, that it would add considerable strength to the Government, which, in the latter part of the past session, Addington's connexions had opposed with a zeal that seemed to have its foundation in pique and personal animosity; and, as soon as the idea had occurred to him, he began to attempt to carry it out. He first opened a communication with Addington, judging that, since he was deeply annoyed by the circumstances under which he had been compelled to resign the Treasury, it was necessary to ascertain whether he was willing to receive an overture from his successor in good part, before compromising Pitt by inducing him to make one which might not be listened to. The result, as he reported to his father, was encouraging; and circumstances so far favored the negotiation that just at the time a vacancy was caused in the Cabinet by an accident which happened to Lord Harrowby, of a nature so serious as to compel him to retire from office. Lord Hawkesbury, having thus successfully sounded Addington, opened the matter to Pitt, who, as a matter of etiquette, since such a reconciliation as was proposed of necessity involved some alterations in the Ministry, first applied to the King for his sanction, which was never more willingly granted, and then gave the answer, which had been confidently calculated on,

<sup>1</sup> In other narratives which mention this reconciliation, Lord Hawkesbury is spoken of as if he had been merely Pitt's agent, employed by him to sound Addington "early in December" (Lord Stanhope), "the 12th of December" (Lord Colchester). But the date of the letter from which extracts are quoted as above is November 6, showing conclusively that the first person to whom the idea occurred was Lord Hawkesbury himself. And an extract from a letter of Addington's, quoted by Dean Pellew (*Life of Lord Sidmouth*, ii. 325), corroborates this idea, by showing that he had heard from Lord Hawkesbury before the end of October, evidently on the subject of reconciliation, to which at first Addington was not very greatly inclined.



authorising the friendly mediator to begin his proposed work of political benevolence. The matter may be said to have been decided from the first, though the arrangement of the details took a little time to complete. The Duke of Portland, who was a great sufferer from ill health, was anxious to retire; and therefore Lord Hawkesbury's plan was that Addington should be raised to the peerage, and succeed the duke as President of the Council, with the lead of the House of Lords, which he himself was willing to resign to him: but Addington naturally stipulated for the admission of some of those whom he looked upon as his especial friends and adherents into the Government as well as for his own; indeed, for his own he was less anxious, since he considered his fortune unequal to support the dignity of the peerage. It was obvious, however, that a consideration of the office which he had lately filled, with the reasons of his original promotion to, and of his subsequent resignation of it, would make it inconvenient in the extreme for him to become, as he at first proposed, a Secretary of State, and remain in the House of Commons. Lord Hawkesbury felt that there were other reasons also which would militate against the success of such an arrangement; and, considering the experience which he had already acquired in both Houses, and his subsequent position as Prime Minister, the opinion which he expresses of the qualities respectively necessary for a Prime Minister and for a Secretary of State in the same House with the Prime Minister is very curious. As he writes to Lord Liverpool, the day after his first interview with Addington, "He never would be able to keep up his credit as second in the House of Commons, attacked as he would be by Opposition; he is much more qualified to be first, as he was before; for good sense, good manners, dignity, and a reasonable speaking will carry a man through the former situation when he has all the *advantage of authority*; but no man can be of any consequence in the second situation in such a body as the House of Commons who is not an able debater

in detail, and has not, above all, the talent of quick reply."

Before Christmas the two, now willing to be reunited, met at Lord Hawkesbury's, and had a long conference, at which the chief points were amicably settled. As what had been going on was of course widely known, their interview had been expected with great curiosity and interest by many, and by none with greater than by the King. From the first Lord Hawkesbury had kept his Majesty informed of the general character of the communications which he received on both sides; and now, the day after the King knew they were to meet, as he had not heard from Lord Hawkesbury since, he wrote him the following characteristic note of commendation and inquiry:

Windsor Castle, December 24, 1804.

The King has the greatest satisfaction in expressing to the Lord Hawkesbury his thorough approbation of the judiciousness and fairness of his conduct in the arduous task of bringing Messrs. Pitt and Addington together, who both are certainly attached to his Majesty, and that will be the real bond of their union, and will rekindle in their breasts the friendship which has from a very early age consolidated them, and which false friends and backbiters had for a time apparently destroyed, but there is good reason to believe had not in reality effected.

The King is most desirous to know how the meeting ended yesterday, and whether Lord Hawkesbury augurs well from this first interview.

GEORGE R.

And the next day, having received the intelligence he hoped for, he showed his approval of their conduct to the two principals in the way which he explained to Lord Hawkesbury in a second letter:

Windsor Castle, December 25, 1804.

Lord Hawkesbury is too well acquainted with the King's sentiments not to feel the gratification that has arisen in his Majesty's mind on the account of the two meetings<sup>1</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> They had a second meeting at Addington's house on the day after the first.

Messrs. Pitt and Addington having proved perfectly satisfactory. This gives the more pleasure as attachment to their king and country are the real ground on which these interviews have been founded. The King will, with great pleasure, see Lord Hawkesbury, who has been the happy instrument of effecting the reconciliation of two men who ought ever to have been friends, and may now easily remain so, either of the days he has proposed. To secure, if anything is wanting, the continuation of the cordial intercourse now effected, his Majesty has prepared letters for each of the parties, going no further than his thanks to both for having reunited for the good of his service. And, indeed, that is one of the greatest eases to his mind that, in a political view, could have been effected. These Lord Hawkesbury, after perusing, is to transmit to each of them.

GEORGE R.

The chief difficulties that arose in the course of the negotiation were raised, not by either of the principals, but by their adherents, who tried, on the one side, to persuade Addington that the consideration shown for his wishes in the proposed arrangements fell short of that which he was entitled to expect; and, on the other, to suggest to Pitt that he was sacrificing his own dignity by giving any share in the actual Government to Addington before he had atoned for his recent opposition by at least an equal period of support out of office. But besides that the political advantages to each were manifest, both were men of too kindly natures to be easy under the estrangement. And Pitt was certainly expressing his real feelings on the subject to the most intimate of his private friends, Wilberforce, when, in allusion to the attacks that were made upon him on the subject, he said, "I think they are a little hard upon us in finding fault with our making it up again, when we have been friends from our childhood, and our fathers were so before us."<sup>1</sup>

By the arrangements finally made, Addington was raised to the peerage as Viscount Sidmouth, and succeeded the

<sup>1</sup> Life of Wilberforce, iii. 211.

Duke of Portland as President of the Council. Lord Mulgrave was transferred to Lord Harrowby's office; and Addington's friend, Lord Buckinghamshire, who, as Lord Hobart, had been Secretary for the Colonies in his Administration, became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Among the subjects of negotiation, it had been stipulated that Addington and his party were to support the war with Spain; an event which, from the circumstances that had caused it, an attack made by a British squadron on some Spanish galleons on their way from South America while the two countries were still at peace, was sure to be singled out for attack by the Opposition. Pitt, however, had had no difficulty in satisfying his recovered friend that, however strong in appearance were the arguments likely to be brought forward against so irregular an act, the reasons which had influenced the Cabinet in directing the attack were stronger still. They were founded on the absolute subserviency of Spain to France; on the consequent certainty that the vast treasures with which the galleons were freighted would be employed for French objects; and also on the fact, which could not be questioned, that the only chance of such an attack being successful lay in perfect secrecy. With such reasons Addington was abundantly satisfied; and the Ministry, strengthened by his accession in numbers and general popularity, since the circumstances under which he had originally become Minister naturally caused his return to office to be looked on as an additional security to the Protestant Church, prepared with confidence to encounter the conflicts of the coming session of Parliament.

That session is surrounded with a certain melancholy interest, as being the last of Pitt's life. His health and strength had been so evidently failing for some years (we have seen the beginning of the decay noticed by Lord Hawkesbury nearly seven years before) that the end can really have taken but few by surprise. Nor, almost till the last, was any deficiency apparent of that

energy of character which marked him out as a man pre-eminently fitted to rule; of that lofty yet winning eloquence which could persuade all but the most stubborn or self-seeking antagonists, and win applause even from them; of that exquisite temper and engaging address, which often made those who differed from him surrender their doubts, and those who were resolved not to do so dread being drawn within the circle of his fascinations;<sup>1</sup> of that fertility of resource, and (its child) that happy sanguineness of disposition, which knew not how to despair, and could often extract comfort and even fresh grounds for hope out of the most disappointing or most adverse circumstances. Yet, though the man himself was still unaltered even by the deadly inroads of secret disease of which he can hardly have been unconscious, the features of this his last campaign were sadly changed from those which had marked his former years of Parliamentary conflict. And the chief differences were such as could not fail to weigh him down with great personal vexation. It was a severe disappointment to him to find how hollow was the reconciliation which had just re-united him to Addington. It was a mortification of the most painful character to be compelled to acquiesce in the impeachment of one of his colleagues on charges affecting his personal integrity and honour, and to remove his name from the Privy Council. And, though it was in some degree a triumph that his own reputation for pre-eminent ability and spotless honour was so firmly established that neither of these events, each of which might have overturned another Administration, failed to shake his, the unusually painful character of the conflicts of this session was probably not without its share in accelerating the decay of his strength.

<sup>1</sup> "He begged me not to write, but to state in conversation what I wished to say. I told him that I was afraid of that, for his manner a good deal affected me."—*Lord Sidmouth to his Brother* (Life, ii 361).

The war, it need hardly be said, continued, and was carried on, as far as our own exertions were concerned, in the same manner as in previous years, solely at sea. But before Parliament met, the ruler of France (a historian may call him the Emperor Napoleon, though during his lifetime the British Government never recognised his imperial rank) made, or professed to make, an effort to restore peace. As if his genius raised him above the necessity of observing the etiquette usual among sovereigns, he did not trust his ministers with the task of opening a negotiation, but with his own hand wrote to King George, whom he called his "Brother," and, in a rhapsody of sentimental argumentation, "conjured his Majesty not to deny himself the happiness of giving peace to the world, not to leave that sweet satisfaction to his children."<sup>1</sup>

Five years before he had adopted a similar course, and Lord Grenville, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had prevailed on the Cabinet to let him draw up an elaborate answer, raising topics for argument in a manner which was certainly useless when the general purport was a refusal to treat under existing circumstances. It was now seen that such a style was a mistake, and, after a careful consideration of the matter by the whole Cabinet, a reply was forwarded (addressed, as on the former occasion, by our Foreign Secretary to M. Talleyrand, who still filled the same office in France), expressing in the most general terms the King's willingness and even eagerness to restore peace, provided it could be "founded on bases not incompatible with the permanent security and essential interests of his dominions," but reminding M. Talleyrand that his Majesty had allies on the Continent whom he must consult before he could "answer more particularly to the overture that had been made to him." It is impossible that Napoleon could have expected, it is highly improbable that he desired, any other

<sup>1</sup> "Je conjure Votre Majesté de ne pas se refuser au bonheur de donner elle-même la paix au monde. Qu'elle ne laisse pas cette douce satisfaction à ses enfans."—*Nap. Corr.* vol. x. p. 100.



answer. He was now far better prepared for war than he had been two years before. He had made gigantic preparations for the invasion of Britain, and had great confidence in the success of his naval combinations which were to facilitate it. While, if it should fail, he was, as the result showed, almost equally prepared to turn the forces which he had collected in another direction, in the hope, if he were unable to overcome or even attack ourselves, of at least wounding us through the side of our allies, and counterbalancing our empire of the sea by establishing an equal predominance for himself on the Continent.

We, on our part, as the reply to his overture intimated, were not indifferent to the interests of the continental nations, with which indeed our own interest was inseparably connected, since it was obvious that our chances of bringing the war to an honourable termination must be augmented in exact proportion to the number and power of the allies whom we could range on our side. And with this conviction Pitt, amid all interruptions and all other causes of anxiety, was steadily pursuing the great object of his foreign policy, the enlisting the co-operation of Austria and Russia against France. Both countries were equal to France in population and most of those resources which have the greatest weight in warlike operations. If Austria had of late been forced to submit to hard conditions, on the other hand the greatest disaster which had befallen France on land since the first outbreak of war had been inflicted on her by a Russian commander.<sup>1</sup> And there seemed no reason to doubt that the two countries, united and aided by the treasures of England, of which the Government was willing to be wisely lavish in such a cause, would be able to establish a superiority which must compel the ambitious warrior on the French throne to a peace which was then only likely to be durable when he should have learnt to his cost that war could not always be, as he boasted that hitherto it had been, "consistent with his

<sup>1</sup> Suvarof's defeat of Macdonald at Novi.



glory." Before the end of the summer the great minister fully succeeded in his negotiations.<sup>1</sup> By his own address, his liberality, and the evidence which his measures gave of the absolute unselfishness of his and his country's policy, he armed against the enemy a force which required nothing but a judicious use of it to render it irresistible. And he could not foresee that the utter incompetency and imbecility of one general, and the rashness of another, would neutralize the superiority unquestionably in their hands, and in a few weeks prostrate the two empires in deeper humiliation than ever at the mercy of their conqueror.

Parliament met in the middle of January, and as before, though Lord Hawkesbury had proposed to resign the lead in the House of Lords to the new President of the Council, it was considered more expedient that he should himself retain it, and the chief management, therefore, of the debates there was still entrusted to him. As events turned out, it was a most fortunate arrangement, since it would have been very injurious to the Government to have had at first but a half-hearted support from its leader among the peers, and before the end of the session to have been deserted by him. The battle between the two parties was at first carried on with equal vigour in both Houses. On the capture of her galleons Spain had declared war against England, and it was not to be expected that the Opposition would allow an act of so questionable a character as an attack on a squadron belonging to a nation with which we were at peace to pass uncriticised. The unhappy circumstances which accompanied the attack (one of the Spanish ships having blown up, with the destruction of nearly all her crew) were owing to the weakness of the

<sup>1</sup> "During the whole of this year Pitt was negotiating his great alliances with Russia and Austria. . . . Never was any measure (as far as human foresight can go) better combined nor better negotiated. Its failure was solely in the execution, and for this either the precipitancy of Austria herself, or the treachery and imbecility of her commanders, are *solely* responsible."—*Lord Malmesbury*, iv. 339.

force which was sent against them, the Spanish captains thinking it inconsistent with their honour to submit to the orders of a squadron only their equal in number and equipment. Had it been, as it should have been, so overpowering as to compel an unresisting submission,<sup>1</sup> though war might not have been averted, we should have been saved the most unfortunate part of the transaction. Lord Grenville, unwearied in his hostility to the Government, and in his displays of fidelity to the principles of his new alliance with the Whigs, undertook the task of denouncing the act which had been committed, but made the defence of the Government easier by the blind furiousness of his language when he described it as "an atrocious act of barbarity, which stamped indelible infamy on our name," and by the positiveness with which he laid it down as his conviction that any war with Spain "might have been prevented by common prudence on our part." For Lord Hawkesbury had no difficulty in leading the majority of his hearers to agree with him that Spain was so completely subservient to France that the French Government was reckoning on her resources as its own; in proving that French men-of-war were actually in the fort of Ferrol at the time of the attack, only waiting till a Spanish squadron, which was being equipped in the same port, should be ready to join them; that some French regiments had also been received at the same place; and that now, as in 1762, Spain was in fact only waiting for the arrival of her

<sup>1</sup> It is curious that no one but Nelson saw this. Orders were sent to Admiral Cornwallis to detach two frigates against them, and to Nelson to send some frigates, without specifying the number. He instantly sent Sir R. Strachan with a ship of the line and four frigates, and with further orders to add to that force any other ships he might meet on his way. But Sir R. Strachan did not arrive at Cadiz till too late; and of the four ships that engaged the Spaniards, two, the *Medusa* and the *Amphion*, had joined those from the Brest fleet two days before by mere accident. Had they not, we might have had the disgrace of being defeated. (See the Author's History of the British Navy, c. xxviii.)

treasure-ships to throw off the mask. In the presence of these facts, the omission to give warning of our intentions by a formal declaration of war, and that practically still graver error of entrusting the enterprise to a squadron so weak as to provoke, indeed to compel, resistance, were overlooked; and the feeling in favour of the Government on the whole transaction was so unequivocally demonstrated that Lord Grenville did not venture to divide, and the House silently sanctioned conduct which, in some parts at least, no member of it could have entirely approved.

After being so successful in a weak case, Lord Hawkesbury was not likely to fail when he had both policy and justice on his side; and, in three debates which arose on motions of the Opposition, which (ostensibly proposing to improve the system of recruiting, to add to the effectiveness of the militia and the army of reserve) were in fact so many motions of censure on the Government, and were designed to compel its retirement from office, he not only carried with him overwhelming majorities (a result which must be admitted to be owing to the general feeling of the House in favour of Pitt), but fully established his own superiority as a debater to every peer on either side; even those who were most opposed to the Government (with the single exception of Lord Grenville, who never saw any merit in those who differed from him) confessing the admirable temper and consummate judgment with which he maintained the principles of the Cabinet, without embittering their defeat to his opponents by a single taunt or sarcasm. These, however, were questions of temporary interest. But immediately after Easter one was brought forward which had never been discussed in Parliament before, but which was henceforth destined to exercise a predominant influence on both parties in the State and on the tranquillity of the whole kingdom for a quarter of a century; embarrassing the formation of more than one Ministry, disuniting others, and at last only settled under the imminent dread of insurrection and civil war.

## CHAPTER VI.

Lord Hawkesbury's speech on the Catholic question—Impeachment of Lord Melville—Resignation of Lord Sidmouth—The King's sight becomes affected—Sir Robert Calder's action—Pitt fails in negotiations with Prussia, and with the Opposition—Battle of Trafalgar—Indignation of the King of Prussia at the violation of his territory—Battle of Austerlitz—Death of Pitt—The King offers the Treasury to Lord Hawkesbury—Gives him the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports—Resignation of the Ministry—Lord Grenville becomes First Lord of the Treasury—Lord Hawkesbury as leader of the Opposition—Lord Hawkesbury's speech on the admission of Lord Ellenborough into the Cabinet—Comparison of the two Ministries—Death of Fox—Lord Hawkesbury's conduct to Lord Grenville's Ministry—Dissolution of Parliament—Conduct of the Ministry on the Catholic question—Duke of Portland's letter to the King—Resignation of the Ministry.

THE Roman Catholics in Ireland had disregarded Lord Hawkesbury's advice to postpone urging their claims for a removal of their political disabilities to a more propitious season. They drew up petitions to both Houses, and even besought the Prime Minister himself to take charge of that addressed to the Commons, though they were no strangers to the fact of his having pledged himself to the King to abstain from any further advocacy of the subject, at least during the lifetime of his Royal Master. It was no unworthy sacrifice of opinion for the sake of office to do so; since, whatever may be his opinions on the abstract policy or justice of any measure, no statesman, and least of all one who is responsible for the tranquil government of a kingdom, is bound to urge proposals which he knows cannot be carried; much less those of which even the agita-

tion may produce great mischiefs. And, after the avowed resolution of the King to renounce his crown rather than to consent to any modification of the laws of which Lord Fingall and his friends complained, such was beyond all question the case in the present instance. So notorious indeed was the impossibility of carrying any motion for the relief of the Roman Catholics, and the likelihood that a renewal of the discussion might throw the King into the same state in which its first proposal had plunged him in 1801, that the next year Fox, when he had on his own shoulders the same responsibility which now weighed on Pitt's mind, imitated his conduct, and declared that he would not agitate his sovereign by bringing the question forward. At present, however, when his object was to embarrass the Administration, he had no such scruples. He and Lord Grenville gladly undertook the patronage of the cause ; presented the petitions, and made them the subject of formal motions in both Houses. The debate in the House of Lords took place on the 10th of May. Except when he contended that the causes which had originally led to the enactment of the restrictions complained of had no longer any existence, but had passed away with the death of Charles Edward, Lord Grenville weakened his case by narrowing it to the condition of the Roman Catholics in Ireland. He panegyricized their uniform loyalty, and, from the forbearance of the Scotch since their union with England to endeavour "to substitute their own religion for the Episcopacy of the English Church," he drew an argument that the Irish Roman Catholics, if placed on a footing of political equality with their Protestant fellow-countrymen, would contentedly acquiesce in the predominance of the Church of England. No argument could have been worse chosen, for in fact the Episcopacy of the Church of England had been suppressed in Scotland ; but Lord Hawkesbury in reply disdained to avail himself of its weakness, preferring to argue the question on broader grounds. A more appropriate opportunity for considering

the merits of the whole question will arise hereafter. But though some of his arguments were prompted by or based on the circumstances of the moment, as when he concluded "that as long as the Catholics refused to take the oath of supremacy they should be deprived of political power; and there was never a moment when adherence to such a principle was more necessary than now, when all Catholic Europe was nearly subjected to France, and the Pope was placed in a state of absolute subjection to that country;" he rested others on general principles, urging that the maintenance of the existing tests was a necessary safeguard to religion. And that "if it was a fundamental principle of the constitution as established by the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, that the King must be in communion with the Church of England, the same limitation ought to apply to the advisers and officers of the Crown. To remove the restrictions (and of course it was plain that they could not be retained on Protestant Dissenters after they had been abrogated in the case of the Roman Catholics) would be to give to those who were the greatest enemies of the Church of England power to interfere with its patronage. At an earlier period in our history the ruin of the Church and the monarchy had accompanied each other, and, as his principle was to uphold the establishment of both, he must resist the motion."

It is evident that these principles, on which he relied to justify the maintenance of the restrictions complained of, were so general that they seemed to pledge the speaker to a perpetual retention of them, though it afterwards appeared that he did not look on them as debarring him from consenting to any relaxation whatever of the existing laws.<sup>1</sup> Whether his present feelings were in any degree influenced by the considerations which he had urged the previous year to Lord Hardwicke cannot be known; but it seems probable that the belief which forms his principal argument in that letter, that many of those

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, p. 381.

who advocated a compliance with the prayer of the present petition did so with a view to making it a stepping-stone to further changes, had its weight with him, and contributed to induce him to express his opinion in a manner from which he could not afterwards personally recede, though, as we shall see hereafter, he was unable so to adhere to it as to maintain it as the unanimous opinion of his Cabinet. Some of those peers who followed him in his vote on the present occasion assigned grounds for their votes which were avowedly founded on the existing circumstances of the kingdom, and, as such, did not fetter their course on the same question at a subsequent period. But those who looked on the removal of the restrictions at any time as dangerous, and those who thought it at the present moment impolitic or impracticable, were, when united, so numerous, that Lord Grenville could only muster 49 supporters, against 178 who voted with the Government. And thus, at all events, the sagacity of the advice which Lord Hawkesbury had given the year before was fully vindicated, even in the interests of the Roman Catholics themselves, whose cause was certainly injured for the moment by this display of the numerical weakness of their advocates. The King himself, as may well be supposed from the feeling which he had shown on the subject in 1801, was greatly pleased at the greatness of the majority. He wrote the next morning to Lord Hawkesbury, that "he was most highly gratified: he trusted that the division would show so strongly the sense of the House of Lords, that there would never again be any difficulty in resisting the Catholic question, which, the more it is examined, the more unreasonable it must appear. One could not but lament that the peerage should produce 51 members to support such a question." And he wrote again the next day to express equal satisfaction at the result of the debate in the House of Commons, where Mr. Fox had been defeated in an unusually full House by 336 to 124. "It showed," he said, "the true



sense of the nation on the Catholic question, and, one must hope, would make it lie dormant. At all events, it was highly advantageous that it had had a full discussion in both Houses of Parliament, and that the question of toleration would now stand on its true legs, and not be pretended to mean more than any wise Government could possibly admit."

Before this debate took place, Lord Hawkesbury had been nearly relinquishing the leadership of the House by exchanging his Secretaryship of State for the office of First Lord of the Admiralty. The proposal that he should do so originated in the only transaction which, in his long career, inflicted on Pitt personal mortification and distress. A commission of inquiry into the condition and administration of the navy, which had been appointed some time before, had brought to light the fact that, some years before, when Lord Melville, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had been Treasurer of the Navy, his deputy treasurer, a gentleman named Trotter, had been in the habit of making use of the funds in his hands, which, of course, belonged to the nation, for his personal benefit. There was reason to think that Mr. Dundas (for at that time he had not been raised to the peerage) was cognizant of Mr. Trotter's conduct. And it was even imputed to him that there had been occasions on which large sums of the public money had been placed to his account at his bankers', and that he had derived a profit from the use of them. It was not alleged that a single farthing had been lost to the nation, but it was argued that by such practices the nation had been exposed to the risk of loss, and that such transactions were clearly in violation of the law.

No charge involving an offence of that character had been brought against a minister of the Crown since the time of the South Sea Bubble. Nor is there any one thing of which England has at all times been more jealous or more justly proud than of the unsullied integrity of her public men, above suspicion as above corruption.

It was not strange, therefore, that the mere whisper of such a charge having been made, on at least plausible grounds, against one who had since become a Cabinet Minister, should have universally produced a most painful impression, or that the Opposition should have eagerly seized upon it as a means of at least embarrassing and distressing the Ministry, if not of overthrowing the minister. Lord Melville declined to give any very satisfactory explanation of the matter, alleging that, as many years had elapsed since he had ceased to fill the post of treasurer, he was no longer in possession of the vouchers which would enable him to render any accurate account; and insinuating also that the sums which had, as was proved, been at times placed to his own credit had in fact been so placed that they might be employed in the secret service of the country, without leaving it possible to trace their application. It is very likely that this was the real truth; and Mr. Whitbread subsequently admitted that he had never suspected Lord Melville of having personally enriched himself by these transactions; but his language at the moment was hardly so candid. He was intimately connected with some of the leaders of the Opposition, and, to promote the political views of his party, at the beginning of April he, as a member of the House of Commons, brought forward an elaborate motion, founded on the report of the commission of enquiry, which he assumed to be of itself a sufficient proof of Lord Melville's guilt, and censuring him in the plainest and strongest terms. The Ministry had held more than one meeting to decide upon the way in which this motion should be met. Pitt himself would have encountered it with a direct negative; but, though Canning agreed with him, no member of the Cabinet was prepared to recommend so bold a course. One or two were probably influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by personal motives. Lord Sidmouth hated Lord Melville, from the belief that he had had a great share in bringing Pitt to act with vigour against him while minister in the preceding spring, and he now openly urged Pitt to abandon his cause as

untenable, with the threat, if he did not do so, of himself withdrawing from the Administration. Lord Hawkesbury, though far from agreeing with Lord Sidmouth, thought a simple negative to the vote of censure too hazardous, as one which went too directly in the teeth of the report of the commissioners, and which might consequently wreck the Ministry without saving their colleague. He therefore suggested the attempt to stave off the vote of censure by a proposal to refer the matter to a select committee of inquiry. He was supported by the President of the Board of Control, Lord Castlereagh, who, as Irish Secretary, had had a share, second only to that of Pitt himself, in carrying the Irish Union; who had since that time been steadily and rapidly rising in the estimation of Parliament as a first-rate man of business; and who, being the most intrepid of men, was certainly most unlikely to recommend any measure which savoured of compromise if he did not judge that there was in fact no alternative. In a motion for such a committee Lord Sidmouth was willing to acquiesce; and it was finally decided that the course to be adopted by the Ministry should be a proposal to substitute such a committee for Whitbread's proposal of censure without further inquiry. Pitt himself moved for the committee as an amendment to Whitbread's motion, but was defeated. When the House came to a division, the numbers were found to be equal, 216 on each side; and the Speaker gave his casting vote for Whitbread's motion, in so doing following the usual etiquette, though he chose also to assign for his decision a statement that "the charges of violation of the Act of Parliament, and of Lord Melville's connivance at Mr. Trotter's conduct, were confessed and established, and fit for the immediate judgment of the House."

It is unnecessary here to go minutely into the subsequent steps of this unfortunate affair; Lord Melville of course resigned his office in the Government, and with his own consent was removed from the list of Privy Counsellors. Whitbread wished to procure an address from the

House to remove him from the King's councils and presence for ever ; but such a course (before any formal conviction, or even trial) bore too clearly the marks of personal animosity and violence to be tolerated by the feeling of the House, and he was forced to withdraw his motion. It was right that a man so far under suspicion as to have been the subject of such a report as that which the commissioners had presented should no longer be a minister or privy councillor of the Crown ; but the report, however unhesitating might be its language, could not be said actually to establish his guilt ; he had as yet had no opportunity of making his defence against it, and, till the accuracy of the report was legally proved, it was obviously unjust to put him under a perpetual ban of exclusion. In fact, that this was the case was practically admitted by Whitbread himself when, on a subsequent day, he moved for his impeachment. Another member, of the name of Bond, one of Lord Sidmouth's party, and who as such was bound to support the Government, proposed instead a criminal prosecution ; and the House of Commons vacillated in a strange and discreditable manner. One day they adopted Mr. Bond's plan, the next day they rescinded that vote and decided on an impeachment,<sup>1</sup> which was instituted in the following session. It was conducted with great energy and ability by Whitbread himself, who acted as prosecutor, and also tendered himself as a witness, and by Sir Samuel Romilly, who in the new Administration which in the interval had succeeded to office had been appointed Solicitor-General. But Lord Melville was acquitted of every article of the impeachment by decisive, and of many by overwhelming, majorities ; and,

<sup>1</sup> There was a doubt of the propriety of their former vote. Lord Hawkesbury writes to Lord Liverpool, "The proceedings in the Court of King's Bench against a peer upon so important a charge can certainly not be defended on any sound constitutional principles. Serious doubts are entertained whether it is not a breach of our privileges. Cowper" [the chief clerk of the House of Lords] "strongly inclines to this opinion. The House of Commons might have addressed the King to direct the Attorney-General to prosecute ; but in this case they have done it not by address, but by *their own order*."

as far as absolving him from any personal corruption, the verdict has been generally approved. That he had been guilty of the grossest carelessness, which in such a matter is but little short of criminality, is beyond all question; but that he had himself made the very slightest profit by Mr. Trotter's irregularities there seems no reason to believe. The most immediate consequence of the transaction was the retirement of Lord Sidmouth from the Administration in a way which does little credit to that statesman's disinterestedness. It became of course necessary at once to fill up Lord Melville's place, and Mr. Pitt's first idea was to place Lord Hawkesbury at the head of the Admiralty. "He was not," as he wrote to his father, "at all desirous of the change. It would bring with it considerable anxieties, and cost him some sacrifices; but, at the same time, he was of opinion that, if it were urged upon him, he could not, under all the present circumstances, creditably decline it. It was certainly the office, next to that of Prime Minister, of the most importance, and of the greatest power and responsibility, and it was of the utmost consequence that it should be filled by some person who enjoyed a due portion of public esteem and confidence, and who would be able to keep down that party spirit which had of late been spreading itself very widely in the profession of the Navy." But Lord Liverpool was far from approving of his willingness to accept it. He admitted, indeed, the paramount importance of the office at a time when we were engaged in a war which was carried on by us almost wholly on the seas. But for that very reason he thought the First Lord likely to be made the scapegoat for every kind of shortcoming. He pointed out to his son (with great truth) that it was "an office in which no man yet had gained credit." He was also very averse to his giving up the lead in the House of Lords, which he would have done if his successor at the Home Office had been a peer. And this last objection seems to have been the one which finally weighed with Pitt, and induced him to abandon his first

plan, and to appoint Sir Charles Middleton, an old admiral who had been greatly in Lord Melville's confidence, and had been his chief adviser in the professional part of his duties. Sir Charles became a peer under the title of Lord Barham ; and, during the short period for which he retained the office, amply justified the selection which had been made. But Lord Sidmouth most absurdly took his appointment as a personal offence. Though himself by no means of a grasping or arrogant disposition, his relations and chief partisans were most insatiable jobbers ; and he had pressed the transfer of Lord Buckinghamshire to the Admiralty in order that his own brother, or brother-in-law, might succeed to the Chancellorship of the Duchy, for which either of them was so far qualified that it made no call on the ability of the occupier. He actually resigned his own office, and induced Lord Buckinghamshire to follow his example. Once more Lord Hawkesbury interposed as a peacemaker, and persuaded him to recall his resignation : but the breach was only healed for a time ; Lord Sidmouth was still sore, and his more self-seeking kinsmen were incurably discontented. In the debates which ensued on different questions relating to Lord Melville, his brother, Mr. Hiley Addington, and one of his chief connexions, Mr. Bond, took every opportunity of showing the most marked hostility to that nobleman, Mr. Bond, as has been already mentioned, even putting himself forward to move the House to proceed against him by a criminal prosecution ; and the conduct of the whole party gave such offence to the chief body of Pitt's original supporters, that Lord Hawkesbury saw that it would be impossible for him any longer to prevent a rupture ; he thought indeed that their pretended support and real opposition to the Government was more embarrassing than their open hostility. The King made no secret of his displeasure at their conduct,<sup>1</sup> and Pitt at last remonstrated openly with Lord

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sidmouth's biographer believes that Lord Sidmouth was offended by Pitt's volunteering to him the statement that he could no



Sidmouth on their behaviour, and declared that it had rendered it impossible for him to give places under Government such as they coveted.

It was not to Lord Sidmouth's credit that he sanctioned their factious conduct by repeating his resignation and adhering to it; Lord Buckinghamshire again following his example. Nor, indeed, did Pitt now endeavour to retain them. In fact it is a sufficient proof how incompatible their continuance in office had become with the preservation to the Administration of the character of an united Government, that Mr Fox had already ventured to open a communication with Lord Sidmouth, the object of which was evidently to induce him to desert Pitt by holding him out the lure of a coalition with himself in the event of his

longer provide for his friends, when he might instead "have silently deferred the fulfilment of his engagement for a time." But a letter of Lord Hawkesbury's to Lord Liverpool seems to show that Lord Sidmouth, in spite of Bond's violent conduct, demanded an *immediate* provision for him. Lord Hawkesbury writes (July 5th) "There is reason to believe Lord Sidmouth will not remain unless Bond is immediately provided for, and Mr. Pitt feels the strongest objections, after the part which Bond has taken, and above all the *hostile* manner in which he took it, to open an office for him till some proofs have been given of returning cordiality. Between ourselves the King has said that, if Mr. Pitt should propose Mr. Bond to him, he should *at the present moment* object to it. How it will all end it is difficult to say. I have not heard a word from Lord Sidmouth on any confidential subject for two months; and in truth he is wholly in the hands of other persons." On the 7th, Lord Sidmouth resigned, and wrote to his brother in the evening with great complacency. "I had an audience of two hours, and everything passed as I wished." He might have been less self-satisfied if he had known the impression he left on the mind of the King. He almost forced the key of the council box in his care into the King's hand, in spite of his Majesty telling him it should be delivered to Lord Hawkesbury. Though the King wished to end the audience, he almost forced his Majesty to listen to him for an hour, and so fatigued and displeased him that when the King returned to his family he said, "That . . . has been plaguing me to death." Lord Malmesbury's Diary, iv. 339.) And he afterwards told one of his attendants that "never since the days of George Grenville had he been tormented by so fatiguing an interview." (Jesse's Life of George III. iii. 437.



hereafter having the authority to form a Ministry.<sup>1</sup> It was necessary for Pitt at once to fill up the vacancies caused by these resignations: and apparently, he entertained a belief or at least a hope that the late decisive divisions on the Catholic question had laid it finally to sleep, and had thus removed some of the difficulties which had previously hindered his efforts to form an Administration on a more extended basis. With this feeling he now made arrangements which were of a manifestly temporary character, combining for the moment two Cabinet offices, removing Lord Camden from the War Department to the Presidency of the Council and uniting his office to that which Lord Castlereagh already held at the Board of Control. But whatever arrangements he may have contemplated, he was not spared to effect them. A few days afterwards on the 12th of July, the Parliament was prorogued. He never met it again. When it re-assembled he was on his death-bed: and the efforts which he had made in the defence of his accused friend were the last occasions on which his voice was heard in the House of Commons. The prorogation itself was remarkable for another circumstance, eminently calculated to enlist the whole people in sympathy for their sovereign, and to strengthen the general wish to spare him all anxieties but such as were inseparable from his position. For almost the first time in his reign, George III. did not attend in person to thank the Houses for their labours, for he could not have read the speech which was prepared for that purpose: his sight was affected. A cataract had recently formed in both his eyes; increasing with unusual rapidity, though not at first supposed likely to produce permanent blindness. Indeed his oculist for some time confidently

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sidmouth informed his usual confidant, Mr. Abbot, that "Mr. Fox sent him a message by Tierney to the effect that it was a great misrepresentation of his sentiments to say that he had expressed any idea of excluding Lord Sidmouth from any Administration on a broad basis." (*Life of Lord Sidmouth*, ii. 370.)

asserted that he should be able to cure him, though the operation for that purpose could not be performed till the blindness had become total. The King was not at first informed of the nature of the disease; and in a letter to Lord Hawkesbury, written towards the end of July, he intimates a belief that it was a mere temporary malady. The hope he implies of an early recovery is very touching, when it is remembered how incurable the affliction hanging over him really proved, and how many years he was destined to pass under what is probably the greatest of all deprivations. The writing is scarcely legible; the signature and part of the postscript absolutely undecipherable from the way in which the one is written over the other, while the confusion of the first sentence shows how unable the writer was to read what he had said:

The King cannot refrain from the pleasure of acquainting Lord Hawkesbury that an accidental inflammation in the worst eye, with the remedies ably used by Mr. Phipps, has proved of great advantage to the use of that eye. Mr. Phipps says that he had a similar instance the last year with the eyes of Lord Melbourne, where a cataract had been expected, but had since completely disappeared . . . .

P.S.—We have just received . . . . Lord Nelson has destroyed . . . . enemy. Heaven has granted us this success.

GEORGE R.

The royal signature had indeed become so undistinguishable at all times that the ministers were thinking of having a stamp made for him to affix to State papers, and consulted the lawyers on the proceedings which would be necessary to give such a mode of signature validity. But presently the disease seemed for a time to be arrested, and some years elapsed before the poor old man became absolutely incapable of distinguishing objects.

The attention of the whole kingdom was at this time absorbed, above all matters, on the movements of Nelson, to which the King's postscript alludes. The intelligence

which had reached Weymouth, whatever it may have been, proved delusive, though four days before Sir Robert Calder had fallen in with Villeneuve, who was flying from Nelson, and had inflicted on him a defeat sufficient to compel him to a total change of his plans, though not so decisive as to satisfy the expectations that had been raised in England of the success to be achieved by any English fleet which should encounter a French one, however superior in number. The circumstances under which Sir Robert had fallen in with the enemy at all were eminently creditable to the energy of the new First Lord of the Admiralty; who, when on the 9th of July the brig *Curieux* reached England with intelligence from Nelson that Villeneuve had returned from the West Indies to Europe, and with the further news that she herself had seen him on her homeward voyage too far to the northward to render it probable that a return to the Mediterranean was his object, despatched her back the very same day with orders to the squadrons before Rochefort and Ferrol, to unite and intercept him. The comparison drawn by the nation between what Calder had actually done and what it was presumed Nelson might have done led, as is well known, to Sir Robert being tried by a court-martial, and reprimanded for an error in judgment and want of sufficient vigour. It may well be doubted whether the defence which he made, founded on the necessity of guarding against the Rochefort squadron coming out to reinforce Villeneuve, to whom he was already far inferior in numbers, was not a sufficient justification of his apparent slackness. But a letter of Lord Hawkesbury to his father on the subject shows that he was not, as other commanders had been, sacrificed to a popular clamour, but that, on the first blush of the case, his fellow-seamen formed an opinion on his conduct unfavorable to him. For the very week that his despatch arrived, Lord Hawkesbury's comment on it to his father is that "The intelligence from the fleet is not satisfactory, and Lord Barham has, I believe, by this

time written to Sir Robert Calder to demand an explanation of his proceedings. The City, in particular, is very much out of humour at what has passed, and the officers of the navy seem in general to think that it will not be possible for him to justify himself."

Whatever may be thought of his conduct, the action which he had fought, indecisive as it was, had the effect of terminating all the apprehensions that had been entertained of a French invasion of this country. Napoleon himself, from the moment that he learnt that Villeneuve, instead of proceeding onwards to the Channel, had been driven down to Ferrol, abandoned the idea.<sup>1</sup> And Pitt, relieved from

<sup>1</sup> The invasion of England had been no favourite with the French army. Among Lord Hawkesbury's papers is the following song. Marmont was the commander of one large division of the army of invasion.

CHANSON DE L'ARMÉE FRANÇAISE EN HOLLANDE,  
AOUT 1805.

*Sur l'air*, MARLBROOK S'EN VA-T-EN GUERRE.

Marmont s'en va-t-en guerre,  
Miroton, ton, ton, Mirontaine.  
Marmont s'en va-t-en guerre ;  
Dieu sait s'il reviendra  
De ce pays là-bas  
Qu'on nomme l'Angleterre,  
Qu'on veut subjuguier  
Et qu'on veut subjuguier  
Pour Monsieur Buonaparte.  
Ce n'est pas notre affaire.  
Miroton, &c.

Ce n'est pas notre affaire  
Que d'aller naviguer  
Pour un gueux d'étranger  
Qui n'est Roi de la France.  
Miroton, &c.

Qui n'est Roi de la France  
Que pour la désoler,  
Pour nous faire enterrer.  
Que le diable l'emporte  
En Corse où il est né

[D'un

any further necessity of watching over the safety of our own coasts, bent his mind with greater earnestness than ever to confirming the inclinations of Austria to join the alliance which had been concluded with Russia some months before. He succeeded, and Sweden also was won on terms similar to those for which Austria had stipulated ; each country being entitled to receive a large subsidy from Britain in proportion to the number of men she was to bring into the field. The only quarter in which Pitt's address failed was Prussia, which, faithful to the maxims of Frederic II. to make acquisitions of territory, by whatever means they might be obtained, her chief object, preferred the chance of despoiling King George of Hanover, and with this view courted the friendship of the Ruler of France.

He was less successful in the negotiations by which he endeavoured to strengthen his Ministry. It had been his hope, that as different topics of disagreement were gradually eliminated, those who had refused to join him before might become more willing to unite with him ; and, wholly governed by one absorbing idea, to serve his country most effectually, he was willing to make many sacrifices to secure to it the benefit of the services of those of whose solid talents he had a high opinion. Relationship still kept him partial to Lord Grenville. The memory of their many conflicts, of the exhaustless fertility, the logical subtlety,

D'un greffier ruiné.  
Ce n'était pas la peine  
De l'avoir couronné  
Contre notre bon gré.  
Morbleu, mes camarades  
Revenons au passé  
Où, Louis Bienaimé  
Nous menait à la gloire  
Sans nous faire noyer.

It is clear Buonaparte was not more popular than his project of invasion with this division of his army. But it is curious to find them going back to contrast him with the infamous Louis XV. even when Saxe was his general.

the indomitable energy with which Fox had often defied his sarcasm or retorted his arguments, made him still more eager to have the benefit of his aid against the common enemy. Unhappily, the slightest expectation of an overture from him made both advance pretensions to which it was impossible for him even to listen.<sup>1</sup> Even if he had brought himself to yield the slightest portion of the demands which they were inclined to make he would have gained nothing, for he would have lost the co-operation of those of his existing colleagues, whom he most valued. Lord Hawkesbury writes to his father at the end of September, at the very time that Pitt was at Weymouth, whither he had gone expressly to consult the King: "I am convinced from *all* I see and *all* I hear from a variety of quarters, that any project of coalition on a broad basis would be most injurious to the country, and most fatal to the reputation of Government. If such a project should be entertained, I am determined to have nothing to do with it." And the King himself had the same feeling. He had indeed no idea of the arrogance of the claims which the Opposition leaders were prepared to put forward, as neither had Pitt; but he declared to more than one person a resolute determination to admit none of them into the Administration, observing, with a peremptoriness that admitted of no discussion, that "he could not trust them, and they could have no confidence in him."<sup>2</sup> One of those to whom he made this declaration, Mr. Rose, attributed the fixedness of the resolution which his Majesty thus expressed mainly to the influence of Lord Hawkesbury himself, who, a favourite from the first, had been steadily rising in the

<sup>1</sup> "Canning told me that all attempts to gain the Grenvilles had failed through the influence of Tom Grenville, who would not hear of a separation from Fox." *Malmesbury's Diary*, iv. 343.) "As we learn from Fox's familiar correspondence at this time, he intended to insist on the condition that Pitt should resign the Treasury, and that some friend of Fox, as Grey, or Lord Fitzwilliam, or Lord Moura, should be placed there in his stead." (*Stanhope's Pitt*, iv. 335.)

<sup>2</sup> *Diaries of the Right Hon. G. Rose*, ii. 200, *seq*

King's opinion. Whatever may have been the cause, it was evident that Pitt had no alternative but to obey, to drop all idea of gaining strength from the accession of other parties, and to continue to conduct the government with his original adherents, and such additional supporters as the perception of his superiority, both in patriotism and ability, to his opponents, might from time to time win over to him.

Meanwhile the whole kingdom, and, above all, the Ministry, were agitated and perplexed with anxieties about the issue of the continental campaign, and by the continual arrival of reports uncertain, and often contradictory. Lord Hawkesbury's letters to his father at this time are full of scraps of intelligence, which he receives and reports without any great reliance on their accuracy, and which, even when proceeding from sources apparently trustworthy, subsequently proved to have no foundation whatever. To give a single instance: on the 3d of November, a vessel arrived at Harwich from Holland, relating that the greatest joy prevailed at Amsterdam on account of a defeat of the French by the combined Russian, Austrian, and Prussian armies, in a battle which had lasted four days, and which had cost Napoleon 28,000 men. Lord Hawkesbury, in forwarding a copy of the captain's statement, for which he declines to vouch, expresses himself nevertheless the more inclined to believe that something important must have happened, because, for the first time since the commencement of hostilities, many days had elapsed without any intelligence through the regular channels, or any foreign newspapers having reached Downing Street.

Important events had indeed occurred, though not of the nature the sea-captain's intelligence implied. The very next day all Britain was alternately lamenting and rejoicing at the greatest exploit that even a British fleet had ever performed; exulting in the contemplation of a most brilliant and decisive victory, and, to its honour, amid all its joy at the prostration of the enemy, doubting



whether the glory had not been too dearly purchased;<sup>1</sup> for the hero, whom all loved as much as they admired and trusted him, had achieved it at the expense of his own life. Nelson was dead.

The statesmen of the Cabinet, however, had other drawbacks to their feeling of triumph at the success of our own arms. We had done our work completely, and for the rest of the war, last as long as it might, we were to remain undisputed masters of the sea. But the same day which brought the news of Trafalgar counterbalanced it in some degree by certain information of the disgraceful surrender of the Austrian army under Mack at Ulm. Lord Hawkesbury's reflections on the two events, with the account of the honours already fixed as to be paid to Nelson's memory, are contained in the following letter to his father:

Whitehall, November 6th, 1805.

DEAR FATHER,

I enclose the *Gazette* of Lord Nelson's victory. There is perhaps no example of so glorious and decisive a victory. The French fought uncommonly well, and Villeneuve is, I understand, in astonishment at the result. Poor Nelson's death is worthy of his life. He lived long enough to know the event of the action. It is a singular circumstance that this victory took place on the very day<sup>2</sup> of the capitulation of Ulm, and almost at the very time that Buonaparte was declaring that ships, colonies, and commerce were all that he wanted. I have written to the King to propose a general thanksgiving. Nothing is yet finally determined about the honours and provision for Nelson's family; but I believe it will be decided to make his heir an

<sup>1</sup> Lord Malmesbury's statement has been often quoted; but it is so honorable to the whole nation that it may be repeated here: "The first impression was not joy . . . I never saw so little public joy. The illumination seemed dim, and, as it were, half clouded by the desire of expressing the mixture of contending feelings. Every common person in the streets speaking *first* of their sorrow for him, and then of the victory." (*Diaries*, iv. 342.)

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be a slight mistake. Trafalgar was fought October 21st, and, according to Alison, Mack laid down his arms on the 20th.

earl, to double the present pension, and to settle it upon the title *for ever*. Collingwood will be created a peer. I trust this event will have its effect upon the Powers of the Continent, and will prove to them how much their honour and safety depends on their own exertions. We have nothing new from thence, and have now been in utter darkness (except what we hear from France and Holland) for a fortnight.

Your affectionate Son,

HAWKESBURY.

The concluding sentence of this letter seems to show that the capitulation of Ulm was not at first thought an occurrence of decisive importance; and indeed, that it was such is rather because it was an indication of the divisions and utter want of energy which characterised the councils of Vienna at that time, than from its intrinsic magnitude. It certainly was not a misfortune which might not have been retrieved; and it was not unreasonable to expect that the very means by which it had been wrought, the violation of the Prussian territory by the French army, might prove also the means of its retrieval, by determining the King of Prussia to form the confederacy against a potentate who had shown, at his expense, so profound a contempt for all the recognised rights of nations. Our minister at Berlin, Mr. Jackson, wrote word that the intelligence of Bernadotte's march through Anspach, "which was received at Potsdam while Baron Hardenberg [his prime minister] was with the King, violently affected his Majesty, who directed Baron Hardenberg to assemble a council composed of the Duke of Brunswick, Marshal Mollendorf, and Count Schulenberg. Their report, which was unanimous, and recommended by the most speedy and decisive measures, was sent to the King on the afternoon of the 17th. . . . Baron Hardenberg informed him [Mr. Jackson], and the Austrian and Russian ministers, that a day or two must elapse before he could communicate to them the King of Prussia's determination; but that they might be assured that he would fully vindicate the honour

and dignity of his crown and sovereignty." An express was sent off to the Emperor of Russia to accept the proposal which he had made, of an interview with the King at Berlin, and Mr. Jackson reported further that "the prospect of Prussia joining the allies against France had excited the most universal joy among the military and every description of persons not avowedly devoted to France." And these anticipations would have been verified, had it not been for the prodigious celerity and success of Napoleon's operations. At the interview at Berlin, the King of Prussia definitively consented to join the allies, only postponing his formal declaration of his intention till he could receive from the French Government an answer to a proposal of a Prussian mediation, which, as Lord Hawkesbury explained to Lord Liverpool, "was, in fact, little more than a pretence for delay, till Prussia could bring up her different armies to the frontier; since the terms were such as it was impossible for France to accept." As all expected, France rejected them; but before the day on which Prussia was to declare war against her arrived, the battle of Austerlitz had crushed the spirit of both Austria and Russia; and Prussia, thus bereft of her expected supporters before she had committed any act of open hostility, was glad to withdraw from the treaty which she had just made, and to fall back on her former plan of enriching herself at the expense of her third ally, and obtaining Hanover; though, as her intention to join the enemies of France was no secret, she was now forced to purchase it by exchanging for it some of her southern provinces.

Lord Hawkesbury was with Pitt at Bath when the news of the battle of Austerlitz reached England, represented, as he reports to Lord Liverpool, "in the worst colours" by our minister at Vienna, Sir A. Paget, whose despatch "was evidently the letter of a man discontented with the Government to which he is accredited." It has been said by more than one person professing to be well

informed, that the intelligence, involving the failure of the confederacy which he had formed with such labour and address, killed the great English minister. But, though it was no doubt a heavy disappointment, the first account given of him after the news reached him is more favorable than some of those of an earlier date. He had been "laid up with a fit of the gout, but it was now going off, and he hoped to be able to drink the waters for a week before he returned to London."

It had been originally intended that Parliament should re-assemble on the 7th of January, 1806, but before that day arrived Pitt had become so seriously ill, that it was deemed more expedient to postpone the meeting till the Tuesday, the 21st. It was not at first apprehended that his illness would have a fatal termination, and he fluctuated so much that, even as late as the afternoon of the day on which Parliament was to meet, Lord Chatham brought word to Lord Hawkesbury that he was "much better than yesterday morning." It had, however, by that time become almost evident, as Lord Hawkesbury wrote to Lord Liverpool, that "even in the event of his complaint taking a favorable turn, there could be very little chance of his resuming public business during the active part of the session." But Lord Hawkesbury did not as yet despair that he and his colleagues might be able to continue to conduct the business of government. Their plan was "to endeavour to gain time as to any essential business, and try to make as strong a muster of their friends as possible." Pitt's name, however disabled he might be for a time, while he lived was still a tower of strength to his party. No man was so honoured ; so trusted. But Lord Hawkesbury did not conceal from himself that "the situation of the King and of the country might become most critical, and it made the rest of the ministers anxiously resolve in their minds what might be best to be done."

He himself, in Pitt's absence, had been the chief framer

of the King's speech, which, as he was not ashamed to state to the House of Lords, the members of which by this time well knew the circumstances to which he alluded, had been intentionally couched in such language as to create no difference of opinion as to the terms of the address which would be presented in reply to it. That end was answered, as the leaders of the Opposition abstained from proposing any amendment, and both parties rested on their arms, waiting to see what turn the Minister's illness might take. They were not long kept in suspense. Before daybreak on the 23d Pitt died. Lord Hawkesbury conveyed the melancholy news down to the King; and reported his interview with his Majesty to Lord Liverpool in the following letter:

*Secret.*

St. James's Square, Thursday.

DEAR FATHER,

I am just come from home for dinner, not having been five minutes alone the whole of the day, and being under the necessity of attending a Cabinet this evening. I have had a very long and distressing conversation with the King. He was much better, however, at the end of it than he was at the beginning. He has returned to Windsor to-night, and promised to remain there quiet till he hears from us, which will probably be on Saturday morning. He has desired that we would, each of us (after the subject has been thoroughly discussed), send him our opinion in writing of what is best to be done. I do not believe there will be any material difference of opinion, as far as I can judge at present . . .

Your affectionate Son,

HAWKESBURY.

On Saturday morning the King returned to London, and Lord Hawkesbury had a second and still longer conference with him. The result of the deliberations of the Cabinet on the two previous days had been that, under the existing circumstances, they should be unable to carry on the government successfully.

In truth the suddenness of the loss which they had sustained (for till very recently no suspicion had been enter-

tained that Pitt's life was in danger) and its real magnitude both contributed to make the Ministry, thus deprived of its leader, seem weaker than it really was. For Pitt had been pre-eminently suited to his office. Equally sound and brilliant, he was the most consummate financier that the world had, or yet has, seen; the most fertile and original in resource; and the most eloquent expounder of his plans and principles of action; dauntless amid dangers, clear-headed in perplexities, and ever consistent in his views and maxims, but at the same time too practically wise to refuse to adapt his policy to the circumstances of the time. And the achievements of his Administration had been worthy of his talents. He had commenced the liberation of trade and commerce from their old shackles; he had brought forward a plan of parliamentary reform admirable alike in its extent and its moderation; thus, though the war into which he was drawn with France compelled him afterwards to suspend his plans for the reform of abuses and the amelioration of the State, setting an example to future statesmen, which has since borne abundant and salutary fruit. The greatest of all measures of domestic reform, the Union with Ireland, he carried in the face of unparalleled difficulties; nor, as we have seen, was it his fault that it was not made a complete measure. As an arranger of alliances he was not less successful, nor has greater political skill been often evinced than that by which, in the last year of his life, he united Austria and Russia in the league against France, a league which nothing but the incredible mismanagement of the allies thus united could have rendered barren. The loss of such a chief might, for a moment, well dismay his followers; the King, indeed, did not share their opinions, and earnestly pressed Lord Hawkesbury to keep the Ministry together, and to take the chief post himself. But Lord Hawkesbury had not formed his opinion without the most careful consideration of every circumstance; he knew that his colleagues had been equally cautious before they decided on their inability to



maintain themselves ; he therefore felt he had no alternative but to adhere to what had been their unanimous decision ; and, unpalatable as he was aware that such advice must be, he urged on his Majesty the necessity of now readmitting Mr. Fox to his councils.<sup>1</sup> From one act of kindness to himself George III. would not be dissuaded. He had formerly insisted on Pitt's accepting the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports as an act of obedience to himself, and he now, in like manner, conferred it on Lord Hawkesbury ; overruling all his objections, and evidently determined to regard that post as his one private piece of patronage.

The adherence of his existing ministers to their resolution of retiring naturally compelled him to have recourse to the Opposition. He determined, to quote Lord Hawkesbury's language, "to swallow a bitter pill," but "to do it in the most dignified manner, and to put the whole on grounds which, if they should fail, would secure the good opinion and support of the whole country." He felt indeed that, after what had passed two years before, he could not, without loss of dignity, make a personal application to Mr. Fox ; but he at once sent for Lord Grenville, and authorised him to form a new Administration, volunteering an express consent to his consulting Fox on the subject. Indeed, Pitt's death and the withdrawal of his colleagues rendered it impossible now to exclude one whom all agreed in considering the man of the greatest ability in the nation. If indeed there was any who might have been expected not to wish for his presence, it was Lord Grenville himself, who not three weeks before had affirmed the existence of cardinal and unextinguishable differences between himself and that statesman on the most important subjects.<sup>2</sup> However, they speedily agreed to take office together ;

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iii. p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote to his brother, Lord Buckingham, January 7th, 1806 : "What is all this to lead to ? . . . A joint Government of Fox's friends and ours, who, the very first day that we meet in Cabinet, shall probably differ on the leading question of our whole policy, that of resistance or submission." (Court and Cabinets of George III. iv. 9.)



and, as if the disagreement between themselves on the topics Lord Grenville had alluded to were not sufficient, they took into their deliberations a third statesman, Lord Sidmouth, who was certainly not supposed to agree with either of them, and who, while himself a minister, had been at least as much the object of Lord Grenville's hostility as Lord North had formerly been of Fox's. But the King accepted all their arrangements without demur; though not without first having a long conference and discussion with those members of his retiring Ministry in whom he still placed his chief confidence, Lord Hawkesbury and the Chancellor. They, however, gave him none but the most loyal advice; and on the 5th of February the greater part of the new appointments appeared in the *Gazette*.

Lord Grenville was First Lord of the Treasury; but, as had happened at the end of the last reign, when the late minister's father, the first William Pitt, held the seals of the Foreign Office, Fox, who now took the same post, was universally considered as the Prime Minister. He had just added to the disfavour with which the King regarded him by a singular piece of bad taste, as well as of opposition to what he could hardly doubt to be the King's wishes: opposing the address which, four days after Pitt's death, the House voted by an overwhelming majority, for a public funeral and a monument to the deceased minister. But, after he was installed in office, his conduct changed, and he rendered himself more acceptable to the King than most of his colleagues by the attentive and respectful demeanour which he carefully and uniformly observed towards his royal master. Lord Hawkesbury was now called upon to fill a new post, that of leader of the Opposition, which brings into action different qualities from those who are required of a minister. The latter is the commander of the garrison, generally standing on his defence; at all events, never provoking hostile demonstration by wanton sallies. The former is the chief of the besieging army, which expects him to let slip,

no opportunity of attacking their adversaries when it can be done with advantage; but to unite with that constant vigilance a prudence which shall abstain from all fruitless assaults, from any attempt to deliver blows on unimportant points; above all, from every enterprise the failure of which may be turned to their discredit or disadvantage. These duties Lord Hawkesbury is admitted to have discharged with singular judgment and success. And the first occasion on which he was called upon thus to exert himself was one of especial difficulty and delicacy, since he had to combine a decided objection to an appointment with a sincere feeling of respect for, and, on many subjects, of agreement with him on whom the appointment had been conferred. The present was manifestly a Coalition Ministry: one division of it being made up of those who had served with Pitt, and had therefore some inclinations towards Toryism; another of those who had throughout been in opposition to him, and were therefore to be classed as pure Whigs: this latter section doubling the former in number; while in the original list of Cabinet Ministers Lord Sidmouth was entirely unsupported.<sup>1</sup> From a natural unwillingness to be so completely isolated he first pressed the claim of Lord Buckinghamshire (who shared the office of Postmaster-General with Lord Carysfort) to a Cabinet office. And, when that could not be conceded, he insisted on, and at last carried, the admission to the Cabinet of the Chief Justice, Lord Ellenborough. There was a precedent for such an appointment in the case of Lord Mansfield; but it was soon found to be so inconvenient that, when that great judge had once quitted the Cabinet, on a change of Ministry, he could never be prevailed on to resume his place in it; and the repetition of such a step, after it had been thus practically discredited, excited such great and general disapprobation that it was made the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Albott arranges the Cabinet thus (ii. 37): Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Mr. Windham, Lord Sidmouth; Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord H. Petty, Lord Moira, Lord Erskine, C.

subject of a distinct motion in each House of Parliament : in both the attack coming not from members avowedly in Opposition, but from the independent party ; Lord Bristol, who mooted the question in the House of Peers, being even a personal friend of Lord Sidmouth himself. It is probable that Lord Hawkesbury, in his position as a former Cabinet Minister, would not have thought fit to originate the objection ; but when, at the beginning of March, Lord Bristol moved a resolution on the general principle, affirming the impropriety of "summoning any of the judges of the courts of common law" to councils of State, he could not hesitate to support it, affirming that "the question was one which vitally touched the very essence of the constitution. He had no personal objection to Lord Ellenborough himself : on many great points he knew that their opinions concurred : but he disapproved of the conversion of the Chief Justice into a political minister, not only on the principles of the British constitution, but on general principles of liberty. He would cite Baron Montesquieu's opinion on the division of political power in a State ; and that great writer had laid it down as an axiom, that it was more adviseable that the judicial power should be separated from the executive than that the legislative power should be kept distinct from the executive. Blackstone had said the same. For himself he was not such an extravagant theorist as to wish to push principles beyond practical utility ; but the course which a wise legislator would adopt would be to make the exceptions to his general principles not as numerous, but as few as possible. In his conception there could be no union more dangerous than that of a judge and a minister of State ; and such, to all intents and purposes, the Chief Justice was now made. He was thus of necessity identified with those who constituted what was called the Government, in danger of becoming a party to all their passions and prejudices ; and giving him, as he himself did, full credit for the utmost purity, it was impossible that, in questions which might arise between the

Government and individuals, he should generally be regarded as an unbiassed judge. Suppose, for instance, a man were indicted for a libel on the Administration ; the Chief Justice might be called upon to sit in judgment on an offence committed against himself. Cases of riot again might arise which the Government would find it necessary to repress by the vigorous exercise of its executive authority. Could it be advisable that afterwards a member of the Cabinet should be found presiding at the trial of those accused of such disturbances ? Lord Bristol had stated truly that, since the Revolution, there was but one instance of a common law judge acting as a Cabinet Minister. Why did he begin his researches at the Revolution, but for this reason, that it was only from that period that the independence of the judges commenced ? The case of the Lord Chancellor having a seat in the Cabinet bore no analogy whatever to that of a Chief Justice, because his jurisdiction had no connexion with criminal law. The Chancellor was removable at pleasure, because he was a Cabinet Minister ; neither the judges nor the Master of the Rolls were, because it was not intended that they should ever become responsible advisers of the Crown. It had been asserted, in the course of the debate, that the appointment could not be stated with truth to be either illegal or unconstitutional ; yet the very speaker who made this admission [Lord Eldon] had argued that, though it might be neither, yet nevertheless it was in the highest degree inexpedient and unadvisable. On the question of the legality of the appointment the authority of his noble friend was indisputable ; and he himself was well aware how difficult it was, when once a step was admitted not to be illegal, to prove it to be unconstitutional. But he had no hesitation in affirming that the present appointment of a common law judge to a seat in the Cabinet was not congenial with the pure principles and practice of the constitution. He should regret to see that respect which was due to the sacred character of a judge diminished by his becoming mixed up, as a party to them,

with the struggles of politics ; and, whatever might be the decision of the House, he affirmed it to be beyond all question that such was the general feeling of the country."

Lord Bristol, meaning his motion rather as a protest against the appointment than as an attack to embarrass the Government, forbore to press it to a division. But it was generally felt that Lord Hawkesbury's speech was unanswerable ; and the reason which makes it desirable to quote portions of it is, that it is a speech eminently characteristic of his union of extensive constitutional knowledge with moderation in its application. It shows his acquaintance with and appreciation of general principles and the theory of government, combined with an indisposition to push them too far ; and founds his objections not on any visionary subtleties, but on cases of probable, ordinary, and even recent occurrence. There had been a vehement outcry against the late Prime Minister for his prosecution of Hardy and his fellow-prisoners ; but that outcry would have been increased tenfold, would have been irresistible, if a member of the same Cabinet which instituted the prosecutions had also sat to try those who were accused. At a later day Lord Ellenborough himself admitted the justice of the arguments that had been brought forward against his appointment,<sup>1</sup> and greatly regretted that he had been induced to lend himself to such a measure.

The new Ministry was not very popular from the commencement. The English people as a rule dislike coalitions, and the union of Lord Grenville with Fox, to whom till recently he had been always most vehemently opposed, and of both with Lord Sidmouth, whom while in office Lord Grenville from the first, and latterly Fox also, had attacked with unceasing bitterness, seemed little less unnatural than that which above twenty years before had incurably damaged Fox's reputation. Lord Sidmouth was more excusable than either, because he, like Lord North before, might fairly consider these solicitations now

<sup>1</sup> Lord Campbell, *Lives of the Chief Justices*, iii. 188.

for his co-operation a practical recantation of the reproaches and contempt they had formerly heaped upon him. And Fox more pardonable than Lord Grenville, because, as more than half the Cabinet was composed of his own adherents, the others were in fact surrendering their judgment to his in every matter on which he might think fit to insist. Still the Coalition was unpopular as being a coalition; and there was no quality in its composition which could tend to reconcile men to what from principle and habit they disapproved. Some of the underlings of the Government, knowing the value of a plausible name, in allusion to the statement that had been advanced and admitted a couple of years before, that it was a time that required all the abilities of the kingdom to be united in its service, boasted that what had been wanted was now accomplished, and christened the new Administration "All the Talents." But, in fact, in practical administrative ability it was not only inferior to the last Ministry while Pitt lived; but, with the single exception of Fox, it was generally inferior to it even after its great chief was taken away. If we look at the principal offices, no prejudice could compare Lord Spencer, the new Home Secretary, to Lord Hawkesbury, any more than Lord Erskine as Chancellor could be placed on a level with Lord Eldon. Mr. Grey was no doubt superior to Lord Barham as a speaker, and, being a younger man, had a higher reputation for general ability and vigour; but of the particular department in which he was now placed he had no knowledge whatever; while Lord Barham, old as he was, had shown an energy which even his younger successor could not surpass, combined with a judgment founded on professional experience to which, of course, he could make no pretension. Again, though as a speaker Mr. Windham had a higher reputation than Lord Castlereagh, he was unquestionably inferior to him as a man of business.<sup>1</sup> One

<sup>1</sup> "July 15th — Rode two hours with Lord Grenville. A dissolution of Parliament is *not* in contemplation. . . . Our other subjects of conver-



member of each Government, though not in the Cabinet, was too brilliant to be passed over without mention. Sheridan succeeded Canning as Treasurer of the Navy. Here, perhaps, there was but little inequality of oratory; even if it be said that Canning never made the impression which is attributed to more than one of Sheridan's early speeches, it still cannot be denied that the latter was no longer what he had been, and his setting rays at the time of which we are speaking could not outshine the meridian brilliancy of the rising ornament of the Tories; while in every other point, in official ability, in large and provident statesmanship, and above all in character, Sheridan unhappily could not be for a moment put in competition with his rival.

What character, therefore, the Administration enjoyed for pre-eminent ability rested solely on the deservedly high reputation of Fox. But it was soon seen that it had little of him but his name. He was ten years older than Pitt, and his constitution was even more completely broken up. Before he had been two months in office it became occasionally necessary to postpone portions of the ministerial business because of his inability to take a part in it; and for the last five weeks of the session he was forced to discontinue his attendance altogether. Early in September he died; but before that time he had become so conscious that his political life was over, that he expressed a desire to resign his office: and Lord Grenville showed such a consciousness that "all the talents" of the kingdom were not yet combined in its service, that he invited Canning to succeed him almost on his own terms. Canning was ambitious and desirous of office, as every man confident of his power to fill it with advantage to his country and to his reputation must be; but he had not that "inconsiderate precipitancy of ambition"<sup>1</sup> which could lead him for the

sation were Mr. Fox's state of health, Windham's utter unacquaintance with militia, and county affairs."—LORD COLCHESTER'S *Diary*, ii. 77.

<sup>1</sup> His own words. See his letter to Lord Barrington, "Life and



sake of office to coalesce with a party with which he had hardly an opinion in common, or of which he doubted the stability. And he had sound reason for his doubts. The King, indeed, reluctant as he had been to entrust the Government to the present ministers, acted with the most scrupulous fairness to them, abstaining from touching in the least degree on politics in his occasional conversations with members of the Opposition.<sup>1</sup> But the Duke of York, who was supposed to be no stranger to the King's secret feelings, was earnest in encouraging the Tory Opposition to an united plan of action. He would gladly have seen an attempt made to dispossess the Ministry before the prorogation; but Lord Hawkesbury and the other leaders of the party thought such a step would be premature. Lord Hawkesbury had already given a cordial and generous support to the Government in the measures which it had adopted towards Prussia on its seizure of Hanover. He was prepared to give an equally impartial sanction to the breaking off, as he foresaw must happen, of the negotiations into which they had entered with France. He reciprocated too the feeling which during the last weeks of Pitt's life had led Fox to withdraw or postpone the objections which he had been prepared to make to some recent measures, "*Mentem mortalia tangunt;*"<sup>2</sup> and, knowing Fox's condition to be almost equally hopeless, he would not harass the last weeks of his life by any needless show of opposition.

But Fox had hardly been laid in the grave when he learnt that the tactics of the Ministry were altered; and he consequently saw the expediency of changing his own.

Times of G. Canning," p. 97. It is remarkable that in "The Court and Cabinets of George III," by the Duke of Buckingham, this overture to Canning is passed over in silence.

<sup>1</sup> See a mention of a visit of George III to Balstrode (Malmesbury, iv 35).

<sup>2</sup> Fox's quotation when, just before the meeting of Parliament in January, he announced Pitt's state to his adherents as a reason for moderation.

Fox's death had led to a slight change in the relative proportions of the Ministry. Of course his own loss had weakened his party in it beyond retrieval, though the office which he had filled was given to the ablest of his personal followers. Mr. Grey's father had been made an earl in the spring, so that he, his eldest son, was now known as Lord Howick. He became Foreign Secretary, with the lead in the House of Commons; and his place at the Admiralty was bestowed on Lord Grenville's brother, Mr. Thomas Grenville. Judging by what occurred immediately afterwards, there can be little doubt that Lord Grenville now resolved to re-open the Catholic question, which Fox, while he lived, would not permit to be agitated. And, as the existing Parliament was known to be unfavorable to any change in the national policy on that question, he determined on a dissolution of Parliament. The intention was viewed with great displeasure by the Opposition, and Lord Hawkesbury seems to have gone beyond his party in considering it not only objectionable, but so indefensible that it might be possible to induce the King to refuse his consent to it. Accordingly he addressed the following letter to his Majesty :

SIRE,

The confidence with which your Majesty has been so graciously pleased to honour me makes me feel it an indispensable duty to obtrude on your Majesty's time for a very few moments for the purpose of bringing under your Majesty's consideration several circumstances which may eventually become of great public importance, and with which I am confident your Majesty would desire to be acquainted.

Since the change which took place in your Majesty's councils in the beginning of February last, an alteration has been produced in the relative state of parties much more rapid and extensive than could have been expected in so short a space of time. Your Majesty's present ministers have disappointed the expectations of many persons who were, in the first instance, disposed to place confidence in them : their strength in Parliament has evidently diminished ; has proved much less than could have

been imagined ; and they have been progressively losing ground in the opinion of the country. On the other hand, the party which constituted your Majesty's last Administration have become more united amongst themselves, and have confessedly acquired a great increase of strength and influence in Parliament and in the country, and more particularly in the House of Commons, where they were supposed, both by themselves and by their opponents, to be most weak some months ago. The result appears to be, upon the most accurate investigation, that independent of that strength which belongs to Government as such, and which may be considered as transferable from one Administration to another, the number of persons attached to your Majesty's present servants in the House of Commons very little exceed the number of those who are attached to their opponents. The state of the county representation in Great Britain will furnish a reasonably fair test of the truth of this observation. The number of county members of Great Britain favorably disposed to the present Administration are forty-nine ; those favorably disposed to their opponents are forty-five ; there are eight undecided, but more inclined to the latter than to the former ; and seventeen altogether doubtful.

Under these circumstances I cannot avoid most anxiously requesting your Majesty's attention to the effect of a dissolution of Parliament at the present time. Such a measure would have the inevitable effect of throwing the whole influence of Government in the borough elections into the hands of the present Administration. It would secure to them the strength they would thereby acquire for the whole of a new Parliament. It would determine in their favour the opinions of many persons who are undecided at present, and, in the event of your Majesty's feeling it expedient to change your Administration, it would deprive their successors of the advantage of that measure which would be essential to the establishment of their power.

This measure, if it should be proposed, cannot fairly be pressed upon your Majesty on any public grounds. The present Parliament was chosen in the month of June 1802. Three years of its legal existence, then, are unexpired, and no pretence for a dissolution can be advanced either on the ground of any

obstruction having been given in the House of Commons to the necessary business of Government, or on account of any material difference of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament. I feel the less difficulty in submitting these observations for your Majesty's consideration in consequence of knowing that, whatever shades of difference of opinion may exist on other points, there is an unusual agreement upon this subject amongst all those who are not connected with the present Administration whose opinion it has been judged practicable or prudent to ascertain.

There are several points connected with the subject of this letter which I could explain more fully to your Majesty in conversation; but, until I receive your Majesty's commands to attend you, I feel the impropriety there would be in my obtruding myself into your presence at this time.

I have the honour, &c. &c.,

HAWKESBURY.

In thus urging the King to refuse his consent to measures on which his ministers had resolved, Lord Hawkesbury was but following the precedent afforded by Lord Temple and Lord Thurlow in 1783.<sup>1</sup> But George III. did not repeat the conduct by which he then had given occasion to unfavorable but hardly unjust animadversion. He probably liked his present Ministry as little as he liked that of 1783. He had contrasted the respectful demeanour of Fox with the arrogance of another member of his Cabinet, whom he did not name, but whom it was not difficult to identify, as walking up to him "in the way he should have expected from Buonaparte after the battle of Austerlitz."<sup>2</sup> And he was even more offended at the sneers with which, as it was well known, Lord Grenville at times permitted himself to speak of Pitt, though he owed to him his introduction to official life,<sup>3</sup> first as Speaker and then as a Secretary of

<sup>1</sup> Stanhope's Life of Pitt, i. 147-149.

<sup>2</sup> Twiss's Life of Eldon, i. 510.

<sup>3</sup> "Lord Grenville, in a note which I saw to-day, said 'that he was determined to make the Treasury as remarkable for its punctuality in

State. But George III. knew also that he himself had been thought to have acted in a way contrary to the spirit of the constitution in encouraging any opposition to his ministers' policy while they continued in his service. And he judged, more correctly than Lord Hawkesbury, that he could not now refuse his consent to the dissolution without, at the same time, requiring their resignation; and that the proposal to dissolve a Parliament that had already sat for four years, though it might be uncalled for, would not be looked on by the kingdom as a sufficient reason for dismissing them. The event proved that he decided wisely, and his forbearance was rewarded by their giving him an opportunity of treating with them, in which he had the sympathy of the great majority of his people.

When the new Parliament met, Lord Hawkesbury restated his objections to the late dissolution, now bringing them forward as a formal accusation of the Ministry, for having advised an unusual exertion of the royal prerogative "with levity and without due necessity." He admitted, indeed, what could not be denied, that to dissolve the Parliament at his pleasure "was a prerogative which was inherent in the King in its strongest sense. If it were possible that Parliament could acquire legal permanence, for ever so short a time, independent of the Crown, there would be no security for the monarchy." But no prerogative could be exercised in an unusual manner without "the ministers who advised such an act incurring the weightiest responsibility." And that this was the character of the late dissolution he considered that he proved by the fact that, "since the passing of the Septennial Act, there had been but one example, that of 1784, of a Parliament being dissolved under six sessions. The dissolution in 1784 had been unavoidable, because at that time a misunderstanding existed between the Crown and the House of Commons with respect to the Government. But no business as it had been heretofore for the contrary' (a sneer as unfounded as ungrateful)." — LORD COLCHESTER'S *Diary*, ii. 63.

circumstance had occurred, no plea had been assigned by the ministers for the late dissolution." This statement of the length of Parliaments during the preceding century will seem strange to a generation accustomed to the proceedings of recent Administrations, which have been in the habit of using dissolution as one of their most ordinary weapons. It may perhaps be doubted whether they have done wisely, or whether they have not rather laid themselves open to the charge of "making the medicine of the constitution its daily bread." And Lord Hawkesbury's argument, founded, as it was, on almost invariable practice, was well calculated to make an impression on those to whom it was addressed. But it was so impossible seriously to question the right of dissolution that he did not venture to found any motion on his objections: if he had, beyond all question the House would have felt that, however ill-judged or causeless the late dissolution might have been, the power of the King to dissolve at discretion was one of such vital necessity to the safety of the constitution, that it was better to let an occasional misuse of it pass unchallenged than to commit itself to any step which might have the least tendency to fetter or embarrass the free exercise of the royal prerogative. And, as matters turned out, before many months had passed Lord Hawkesbury himself had reason to rejoice that he had not elicited such a vote from any considerable number of his brother peers.

Lord Hawkesbury had not in his letter endeavoured to alarm the King on the subject of any concessions to the Catholics. Indeed the intentions of the ministers on that subject were probably hardly suspected when he wrote. But very soon after the meeting of the new Parliament, which took place in the middle of December, a report gained ground that they were preparing a bill intended, if not as an actual removal of all the restrictions affecting Roman Catholics, at least as such a relaxation of some of them as must prove an inevitable stepping-stone to the abolition of the rest. And though Lord Sidmouth had in



no degree withdrawn his objections to such a step, yet he had greatly contributed to encourage his colleagues in a belief of its practicability by a statement that the King was so absorbed in meditation on the increase of his blindness and other infirmities, as to have become indifferent to political questions. Under this impression the leaders in the Ministry thought that they might safely afford a modified indulgence to the Roman Catholics. They were certainly influenced solely by the sincerity of their conviction of the justice of the claims preferred by that body to a perfect equality of civil rights with their Protestant fellow-subjects, and not by any mere personal motive. On the contrary, they thought the conduct of the Irish Roman Catholics at the time, and especially of their leaders, not only factious and intemperate, but most embarrassing to the Administration;<sup>1</sup> but they would neither allow this feeling of personal annoyance to weigh with them, nor those more important considerations which had made such men as Pitt and Fox, though equally impressed with the wisdom of the concession, renounce all further agitation of the question. And they prepared a bill which, though not going all the lengths which Pitt had originally proposed, should yet grant an effective measure of indulgence which would be particularly acceptable to the higher classes among the Roman Catholics, and would supply hereafter an argument for granting more. A bill passed in 1793 had enabled Roman Catholics in Ireland to hold any commissions in the army, short of the very highest; but, by a singular oversight, it made no mention of their serving in England or Scotland, though the regiments to which they belonged were, of course, as liable to be quartered in either of those countries as in Ireland. The first proposal of the Ministry went solely

<sup>1</sup> See "Life and Opinions of Earl Grey," p. 143, where the writer (the present Earl) quotes a letter from Lord Grenville to his father, characterising a speech made by Mr. Keogh at a meeting of the Irish Roman Catholics, as one which "for its intemperance and inflammatory tendency had hardly ever been equalled."



to the rectification of this omission by the addition of one or two clauses to the Mutiny Bill. But having procured the King's consent, though far from cheerfully or willingly given, to those clauses, they were, by that success, encouraged to attempt more; they withdrew those clauses, and substituted for them a separate bill, giving to Roman Catholics, in every part of the King's dominions, a right to hold any rank in either army or navy.

Such a concession was certainly a different thing from a grant of civil privileges, or rather from a removal of civil restrictions. But it was obvious that it must immediately lead to it; since it would have been an intolerable inconsistency to refuse an equality of rights to those whom the State invited to an equality of dangers. It is singular that **the ministers** should have expected to obtain the King's sanction to it, because, even when assenting to the previous measure, he had **expressly** declared that "he would not go one step further."<sup>1</sup> But so **strangely** were they led away by their wishes, that they not only **expected** to obtain it, but believed that they had obtained it, and in that belief **they** introduced the bill. Its introduction led to a warm dispute in the Cabinet. Lord Sidmouth, the Lord President, who was averse to any relaxation of the existing restrictions, and who declared not only that he could be no party to such a measure, but that he had not been aware that any such had been contemplated by his colleagues,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sidmouth, a few weeks later, stated the written consent which the King had given to the additional clauses in the Mutiny Bill to have been concluded in these words: that "however painful his Majesty had found it to reconcile to his feelings the removal of objections which may have the most distant reference to a question which has already been the subject of such frequent and distressing reflection, he would not, under the circumstances in which it was so earnestly pressed, and adverting particularly to what took place in 1793, prevent his ministers from submitting, for the considerations of his Parliament, the propriety of inserting the proposed clauses in the Mutiny Bill. Whilst, however, the King so far reluctantly conceded, he thought it necessary to declare that he could not go one step further." (Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, vol. ix. p. 393.)

at the same time asserted his conviction that his royal master was equally ignorant. Lord Grenville and Lord Howick affirmed that the object of their bill had been fully explained to the King by the latter nobleman, that he had deliberately assented to its introduction, and, moreover, that it had been most distinctly expressed in a despatch which had been written to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and which, before being sent, had been submitted to his Majesty, and had been returned by him without comment or the slightest intimation of disapproval. But Lord Sidmouth proved to be right. When the real scope of the bill was explained to the King, he was thunderstruck and indignant. He affirmed that he had not only not assented to any such measure, but that his ministers knew that he never would. The King and Lord Howick were thus at direct issue on a matter of fact. And, as Lord Howick's scrupulous veracity and honour are above suspicion, the fairest way of solving the contradiction would appear to be to suppose that, in his conference with his minister, the King had abstained from repeating his disapproval, as thinking it sufficiently indicated by the terms in which he had given his sanction to the clauses in the Mutiny Act, and that the unfortunate state of his eyesight had caused him to overlook or mistake the sentences relating to the bill in the Irish despatch. However this may be, it is certain that, from the moment that he knew the real character of the bill now before Parliament, he announced in the most positive manner his determination never to sanction it. And, though what had thus taken place between him and his ministers could not yet have been known to any but the members of the Cabinet, it happened, by a singular coincidence, that the next day<sup>1</sup> the Duke of Portland wrote to his Majesty, expressing his belief that his Majesty's wishes and intentions on the

<sup>1</sup> According to Lord Sidmouth's speech, already alluded to, this happened March 11. The Duke of Portland's letter is dated March 12th, and is given at length in Lord Malnesbury's Diary (iv. 360).

subject were misunderstood, his conviction on this point being so strong that he ventured to add that, even if "any peculiarity of circumstances should have induced his Majesty to acquiesce in that bill, he himself should think that, by following the dictates of his own conscience, and voting against it, he should not offend." He had no doubt that the bill might be, and would be, defeated in the House of Lords; and if the King should in consequence "be driven to take the conduct of his affairs out of the hands of those who were now administering them, he placed his own zealous and faithful services at his Majesty's command."

The consequence of such a step as that taken by the Duke, who had for many years enjoyed a very special degree of private intimacy with the King, could hardly have been a matter of doubt for a moment. George III. again announced to his ministers, in the most unmistakable terms, his repugnance to their policy on the subject in question; and he sent a similar communication to the Duke. He went further; he resolved to protect himself from a renewal of such agitating vexation. And when the ministers, in consequence of his declaration, withdrew the bill, he required of them a promise that they would never again, under any circumstances, re-open the question. To give such a pledge they thought incompatible with their duty, whether as privy councillors of the Crown or as ordinary members of Parliament; and such a refusal was practically equivalent to a resignation of their offices.

## CHAPTER VII.

The King sends for Lord Hawkesbury—The Duke of Portland becomes Prime Minister—Lord Hawkesbury the most prominent member of the new Administration—Debate on the change—Lord Hawkesbury's speech—Maiden speech of Lord Aberdeen—Dissolution of Parliament—Treaty of Tilsit—The expedition to Denmark—The Orders in Council, and dissatisfaction of the United States—Quarrels between the Prince and Princess of Wales—Arrival of Louis XVIII. as Comte de L'Isle in England—His letters to the King and Lord Hawkesbury—Plans of the Portuguese royal family—Debate and speech of Lord Hawkesbury on the Danish expedition—Seditious conspiracies in Ireland—Lord Hawkesbury's policy in Ireland—Proposal for a commutation of tithes in Ireland—Lord Grenville moves for a Committee on the Catholic question—Arrangements in Scotland, and Lord Hawkesbury's rules for the distribution of his patronage.

THE first step the King took towards the formation of a new Administration was to seek the advice of Lord Hawkesbury and Lord Eldon. They found him, as is mentioned in a letter from Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Liverpool, "never better in health or more composed in manner. He communicated to them all that had passed between himself and his Government on the Catholic bill. The important facts of the transaction were fortunately in writing, and formed a complete justification of the King's conduct. He had resolved," Lord Hawkesbury added, "on changing his Government," and Lord Hawkesbury anticipated "that the new arrangements would be made without any considerable difficulty."

During the next few days, with the exception of those

persons who were not yet formally divested of their ministerial character, George III. saw no one but Lord Hawkesbury. And it was through him that all the arrangements for the new Administration were completed. The King had intended to place him at the head of the Treasury, but the whole party had already come to an understanding to recommend that the nominal lead in the new Administration should be conferred on the Duke of Portland. When, twenty years before, he had been placed in the same situation as the chief of the Coalition Ministry, the Duke had displayed no kind of ability; and his natural mediocrity of intellect was now enfeebled by an agonizing disease, which would prevent his taking an active part in Parliament. But he had great borough influence and a most extensive political connexion; both of which would be of service in the outset. For it required no shrewdness of foresight to predict that the new Ministry would be exposed to "a most formidable attack" from their predecessors, though Lord Hawkesbury, when he prophesied this, did not doubt that "if they had good nerves they should get through it." He himself was, as before, to lead the House of Lords, an arrangement that hardly required specifying, for the Duke himself, during the two years and a half that he remained at the Treasury, never addressed a single speech to his brother peers, if indeed he ever appeared among them at all.

Lord Hawkesbury returned to the Home Office, the other Secretaries of State being Canning at the Foreign Office, and Lord Castlereagh in the Colonial and War Department; Mr. Perceval, who had previously held no appointments but those connected with his profession of the law, became Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the lead in the House of Commons; Lord Eldon resumed the seals; the Admiralty was entrusted to Lord Mulgrave. The other places, inferior in importance, though higher in dignity, the Presidency of the Council and the custody of the Privy Seal, were conferred on Lord Camden and Lord West-

moreland. Lord Chatham became Master-General of the Ordnance ; Mr. Huskisson resumed his old post as one of the Secretaries of the Treasury. And, among those not in the Cabinet, two subsequently rose to an eminence which forbids the passing over their names in silence : Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed Secretary for Ireland, and Lord Palmerston became one of the Lords of the Admiralty. And thus was inaugurated the great Tory Ministry, which, with scarcely any changes but those occasioned by death or the growing infirmities of one or two members, governed England for above twenty years with unbroken success and unequalled glory. From the very first it bore in a high degree the stamp of Lord Hawkesbury's own character ; reflecting it, of course, to a greater extent when, at the end of five years, he became its acknowledged chief.

His task of upholding the new Ministry in his character of leader of the House of Lords began before his other and more official duties as Secretary of State had made any great call on his time or abilities. He had not deceived himself when he foretold that they should have a formidable attack to encounter. For, the very day that he received the seals, Lord Grenville gave notice of his intention to explain on the morrow the circumstances which had led to his finding himself in his present situation ; and shortly afterwards one of his chief partisans, the Marquis of Stafford, gave notice of a resolution which, though couched in a single paragraph, was, in fact, rather two resolutions than one, since there was no necessary connexion between its different clauses. The first was particular ; it lamented the recent change in his Majesty's councils ; the second was general ; it asserted it to be "contrary to the first duties of the responsible ministers of the King to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from submitting to his Majesty faithfully and truly any advice which in their judgment the course of circumstances may render necessary for the

honour of his Majesty's crown, and the welfare of his dominions."

For the purpose of this narrative it will be more convenient to look on the two debates as one general discussion of the recent transactions, and to combine the two speeches made by Lord Grenville and the two replies which they received from Lord Hawkesbury. The speech in which Lord Grenville professed to explain the circumstances which had caused the fall of the late Ministry was rather an attempt to lead the House away from the real question, than a judicious or even skilful exposition of the merits of the case. He gave an elaborate exposition of the arguments in favour of the removal of the restrictions which pressed on the Roman Catholics, and affirmed with great emphasis, what every one knew, that both Pitt and Fox had adopted them as irresistible. In touching on the merits of the bill which had been prepared, he, as was not unusual with him, injured his cause by overstating it, representing the refusal to remove the existing restrictions "as a renewal of persecution for the sake of differences in religion," and asked, with a vehemence which many of even his own supporters felt to be misplaced, "If persecutions for the sake of differences in religious opinions were again to be revived in Ireland, could there be any question that it would produce the most dreadful dissensions?" But he slurred over the equally well-known fact that both the great statesmen whom he mentioned had in the last two years of their lives deliberately resolved not to bring the question forward, because, however maintainable it might be in principle, circumstances were such that to press it while those circumstances existed must be useless, and might be in the highest degree mischievous. And he gave no adequate explanation whatever of the reasons which had induced himself and his colleagues to disregard their example, and to press the consideration of proposals to which, as they well knew, the mind of their royal master was unalterably averse. He said indeed that Lord Howick



had been under the impression that he had obtained the sanction of the King to the introduction of the bill; but he took no notice of the great improbability that, on a matter on which his Majesty had hitherto felt so strongly, he should suddenly have entirely changed his mind, without a single argument having been employed to lead to that revolution in his opinions: an improbability so strong that, the moment the full force of the intended measure was seen, both the Duke of Portland, who was out of the Ministry, and Lord Sidmouth, who was a member of the Cabinet, came to the same conclusion, that his Majesty must have given his consent to the measure under a total misconception. He was more successful when he proceeded to justify his refusal to pledge himself never to re-open the question, on the ground that, even if he had in his own mind resolved to abandon it till he saw a prospect of carrying it, it was clearly quite a different thing to debar himself from doing so, under any pressure of political necessity, by a formal renunciation. And he argued with considerable force that such a pledge was absolutely inconsistent with the duties of ministers. It was, as he truly said, "their duty to advise the King, and to give, without favour or affection, that counsel which they thought best for the country." And he asked, "What would be the situation of any set of men who should bind themselves by oath to discharge this important office, and at the same time bind themselves by a written promise not to discharge it? Could the British constitution exist if ministers should give pledges of such a character?" He argued fairly and convincingly that such a pledge once given would have a tendency to become a precedent. And he endeavoured from that argument to throw a heavy responsibility on the new Administration, contending that, "as such a pledge was required of the ministers who retired, upon every fair construction it must have been given by those who had succeeded them. And if this doctrine and practice were to prevail, the corner-stone of

our constitution, namely, the maxim that the King can do no wrong, and that his ministers are completely responsible, is gone. We should return to those principles which must sap the foundation of the monarchy; to those, he had almost said, diabolical principles by which the King of this country was once brought to answer to his Parliament, and was made responsible for all the transactions of the Government."

Lord Hawkesbury, in reply, declined, on this occasion, to enter at length into the merits of the Catholic question itself, as one which had already received "the most ample discussion in both Houses of Parliament, and had been decided on by the largest majorities ever known two years before;" though he did not abstain from briefly reiterating his own opinion, that the removal of the restrictions on the Roman Catholics would be a change of "the fundamental principle of the constitution, which had established a Protestant Government and Church Establishment; he believed that such a change would overthrow the constitution; and, though this doctrine might be termed bigotry, he preferred to any new lights the bigotry of 1688, which had effected the Revolution, and established the liberties of this country on the most solid foundation. But he conceived that, even if he had been favorable to a removal of all restrictions, he might still, with perfect consistency, have objected to the measure brought in by the late Government as one which would only have unsettled the question; for was it possible to think that this measure would have satisfied the Catholics, that it would not rather have stimulated their desire for further concessions? This measure was to give them the sword, but to refuse them everything beside; and yet he had never conversed with any person on the subject who would not rather grant to the Catholics what the late ministers by this measure refused them, and refuse what by this measure they had granted." He then entered into the, for the moment, more important question of what the original proposal of the ministers had been to which the

King had assented, and of how far they were justified in inferring his approval of the larger measure which they had subsequently introduced. By a minute but, as no one denied, a most accurate dissection of the papers which were before the House, he completely established his assertion that the original proposal laid before his Majesty "did not go further than to make the provisions of the Irish Act, the Act of 1793, general. His Majesty was assured that it was only the same measure to which he had assented in 1793, and was only intended to carry into effect that Act according to the principle upon which it had been enacted. That principle had been to give to the Catholics the privilege of holding certain commissions in the army, reserving others; and the reservation of some formed as much a part of the principle as the concession of others. When it was subsequently found out that a clause in the Mutiny Act would not have the power, which it had been intended to give it, of making the Act of 1793 general, a separate bill was introduced. That step was so far unobjectionable; but not so if the object aimed at in the new and separate bill was different from that which was meant to be accomplished by the addition of clauses to the Mutiny Act. How any misapprehension as to the King's opinion subsequently arose it was not for him to decide; but he had authority to state that, on the 3d of March, a communication was made to his Majesty on the subject, and on the 4th Lord Howick had an audience of him, when his Majesty stated his objections to the measure. Yet, in spite of what had thus fallen from his Majesty, that same evening Lord Howick gave notice of his intention to bring in the bill, and the next evening he actually introduced it into the House of Commons. He fully acquitted that noble lord of intending to assume a permission which had not been granted to him. He was ready to admit that that noble lord had felt convinced in his own mind that nothing had fallen from his sovereign during his audience that precluded him from opening the measure as he had done in his place

in Parliament. But it was admitted that the ministers soon found that the King had not been made aware of the intended effect of the new bill ; that, as soon as he became acquainted with it, he declared his entire and absolute disapproval of it ; and that the ministers, finding that it could not be modified so as to answer the purpose for which it had been intended, withdrew it altogether."

He proceeded to defend and justify the pledge which the King had required from his late ministers. "In withdrawing the bill it appeared that they had made two reserves: first, that they should be at liberty to declare their opinions on the general policy of the measure, as well on the withdrawal of the bill as in the event of the Catholic petition being presented; secondly, that as a Government they should be at liberty to bring the subject from time to time under his Majesty's consideration, by recommending such measures as they might think proper to be adopted. When any individual," he proceeded to argue, "consents to give up any measure, he has, no doubt, a right to propose conditions: but in this case there were two parties; and, though the late ministers had a right to propose conditions, the situation of his Majesty was not to be forgotten. He asked their lordships to consider what would have been the situation of the King if he had assented to that proposition? what would have been the effect of such an assent but to divide the unity of the Executive? Would it not be to destroy the constitution, one of the wise maxims of which was that the King could do no wrong, thereby casting a veil over his sacred character? Would it not have the effect of casting the whole odium upon his Majesty of resisting the measure, and of giving the whole popularity to his ministers? Was his Majesty to be kept in a constant state of expectation, waiting till his ministers might think they had a greater power of extorting his consent to it? He was not aware of any other alternative his Majesty had when they had refused to withhold the statement of their opinions, or to make any promise respecting the future,

than that which he had adopted. He had authority to state, on the part of his Majesty, that the measure which had been brought forward was widely different from that which had been first proposed to him and sanctioned by him. For himself, he could aver that till he had been called upon, in conjunction with Lord Eldon, by his Majesty, he was wholly ignorant of the transaction. But, when he had been so called on, it would have been a base shrinking from his duty if he had not yielded obedience to his sovereign's commands. And he shrank from no responsibility which that obedience had imposed upon him. On the contrary, he maintained that those who shrank from responsibility were Lord Grenville and his late colleagues, who, in order to cloak their own misconduct and absurdities, had so strangely ventured to arraign the personal conduct of his Majesty at their lordships' bar."

In these last-quoted sentences Lord Hawkesbury most adroitly took up his strongest ground. If we look at the whole transaction by the light of constitutional principle, and, it might even be said, of common sense, it is difficult to deny that for a privy councillor or minister to pledge himself never under any circumstances to recommend a particular class of measures or line of policy to his sovereign would be plainly inconsistent with that earlier duty to which, on becoming a privy councillor, he had most solemnly bound himself: at all times to tender such advice as he should think for the benefit of both king and kingdom. But exactly in proportion to the strength of this argument does blame attach to Lord Grenville and his colleagues for voluntarily and gratuitously placing themselves in a position in which such a pledge was likely to be demanded of them. The King's demand could not have taken Lord Grenville by surprise, for no one knew better than he that six years before George III. had required a very similar pledge of Pitt, and had parted with even him when he declined to give it. It may be admitted that the King, in doing so, had taken up a false position, but it was sure

that, under similar circumstances, he would return to it ; and the deeper Lord Grenville's feeling of the unconstitutional character of such a demand was, the plainer was his duty to avoid provoking his royal master to make it. He had certainly laid himself open to Lord Hawkesbury's charge, that, in his defence of himself for declining to give the promise asked of him, he was in fact arraigning his king ; his conduct in so doing being aggravated by the consideration that it was his own wanton wrongheadedness that had brought the King and himself into such a situation. The result of the debates showed the feeling of both Houses of Parliament on the general features of the transaction. In the Lords a majority of 81, in the Commons one of 46, rejected the motions of the Opposition, showing by their votes a resolution to give the new Ministry fair play ; the majority being in each instance probably augmented by a feeling of sympathy with the King, and in some degree by a jealousy and distrust of the Roman Catholics, of whom the late ministers and their adherents were from this time forth looked on as the especial champions.

Two circumstances were remarkable in the debate and division in the House of Lords ; the first appearance as a speaker of a future Prime Minister, and the extreme fulness of the House. Lord Hawkesbury's report to his father, now sinking under extreme old age, alludes to both :

Nothing could go off better than our debate in the House of Lords ; and the division exceeded my expectations. The House of Lords was never on any former occasion so full : the largest number that ever divided before, including proxies, was 229, and the number last night was 261 ; as I hear, within 15 of the whole number that had taken their seats. The debate was, in fact, very good. Lord Aberdeen spoke for the first time, and did well. Lord Harrowby made the best speech I ever heard from him. It produced a considerable effect on the House, and evidently galled Lord Grenville particularly. I never heard from Fox, in the times of his greatest violence,



so factious and mischievous a speech as Grenville's. I do not, however, dread any bad effects from it even in Ireland, as I know, from experience, that sort of speech defeats its own object. There will be another debate in the House of Commons to-morrow, but after the great majority in our House, and the decision of the City, it is not to be apprehended that the minority will increase in numbers.

The opinion of the city of London had at that time greater influence than it carries at the present day; and that body, looking on the struggle between the two parties as turning solely on the concession or rejection of the claims of the Roman Catholics, proclaimed its opinions by an address to the King, thanking him for the support which he had "recently given to the Protestant reformed religion." The feeling was so general throughout the country that the ministers were prompted to avail themselves of it to the utmost; and, forgetting how they had condemned the dissolution of the previous year, resolved to repeat it, though the existing Parliament had only sat for a single session. As a matter of constitutional practice it cannot be thought justifiable thus to have thrown the whole kingdom into the turmoil of a general election, merely in order to increase their majority by taking advantage of the excitement existing on a particular subject "before the country had time to cool."<sup>1</sup> But as a measure of party tactics it succeeded perfectly. The new Parliament met in June, and in the debate on the address, though Lord Howick himself moved an amendment, and supported it by one of his most elaborate speeches, in which he travelled over the whole ground of difference between the present and the late Governments, his own conduct, the principles of religious toleration, and the loyalty of the Roman Catholics, he found his adherents fewer by fifty than they had been in the last Parliament, and was defeated by a majority of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hawkesbury's expression to his father on announcing to him the intention to dissolve, in the same letter of which an abstract has already been given.



nearly 200 votes. In another division, a few days later, when Mr. Whitbread moved for a committee on the state of the nation, the result was the same : and during the latter part of the session, which did not last quite two months, the Opposition in the House of Commons almost ceased from dividing the House, and in the Upper House Lord Grenville altogether gave up his attendance.

And it was well that the Ministry found itself strong. For the address had scarcely been voted when intelligence arrived from the Continent of events which had not only for a time put an end to every prospect of resistance to France by our allies in the east of Europe, but which also threatened to augment our enemies to a very important extent. In the middle of June Napoleon had defeated the Russians in the great battle of Friedland. In itself the victory was not one which ought to have decided a war, for the Russian army engaged was less than 50,000 men ; and had not yielded without inflicting prodigious loss upon their enemies, who were infinitely superior in numbers ; only four months before, when the forces were more nearly equal,<sup>1</sup> they had fought a drawn battle with the French emperor at Eylau, which, indeed, if their general had not retired the next day, they might have claimed as a victory ; and, if the whole campaign were taken into consideration, the French had probably been the greater sufferers. But Alexander, though possessed, as he afterwards showed, of both bravery and fortitude, was a vain, impulsive man ; easily offended, easily flattered. He had conceived a great admiration for Napoleon, which was fostered by some of the French conqueror's adroit partisans in the Imperial Court ; he had taken offence at England,

<sup>1</sup> Alison gives the numbers at Friedland, fought June 14, as on the side of the French 70,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, against 40,000 Russian infantry and 8,000 cavalry ; and at Eylau, fought February 8, as 85,000 (of which nearly 16,000 were cavalry) against 75,000. He does not specify the number of the Russian horse, which, however, were far fewer than the French. But the Russians at Eylau had 460 guns to 350 French.

as if it undervalued his alliance because it hesitated to furnish the enormous subsidies which he had not been ashamed to solicit; and, under the influence of these combined feelings, he now opened a negotiation with Napoleon. Ten days afterwards the two sovereigns had an interview at Tilsit, when they personally arranged a treaty, providing not only for the cessation of the war with one another, but for the co-operation of Russia with France against England; while by secret articles it was also arranged that they should compel Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal to join their confederacy. Throughout the whole war our Foreign Office was admirably served by its agents: when Lord Hawkesbury filled that department the despatches sent or received by the foreign ambassadors in London were lying on his desk copied and deciphered on the very same day that they quitted or arrived in London; and the duty of procuring the earliest intelligence was not likely to be neglected by so provident and energetic a secretary as Canning. The substance of the Tilsit treaty, secret articles and all, was instantly transmitted to London; and the Ministry, thus warned in time, lost not a moment in taking steps to protect the country from the new attack which was aimed at it.

They were wanting neither in resolution, nor in promptitude, without which indeed resolution would have been useless. The most important part of the secret articles was that by which the new friends agreed to compel Denmark to join them against us; since Denmark had a powerful fleet which, if added to the naval force of France and Russia, would strengthen them in the arm in which they were weakest, and might prove of no trifling service to the French Emperor in the event of his resuming his project of obtaining the mastery of the Channel with a view to the invasion of our shores. We resolved to prevent that fleet from being so turned against us. To suppose that Denmark would be able to resist the compulsion intended to be brought to bear on her was impossible. The only safety for ourselves

lay, therefore, in anticipating it; and with this feeling Canning, as Foreign Secretary, proposed to his colleagues to demand of the Danes a temporary surrender of their fleet, a deposit of it in our hands while the war should last, and to support that demand by the despatch of such a force to the Baltic as should both render it impossible for the Danes to refuse it, and excuse them even to Napoleon himself for a submission which would so cruelly derange his plans. His advice was adopted, and carried out with a celerity as admirable as the boldness of the advice. The conference at Tilsit had taken place on the 25th of June; the treaty founded on it was not actually signed till the 7th of July. On the 27th of the same month a combined force of twenty-seven ships of the line and 20,000 men sailed for the Sound, and in less than a week reached Copenhagen. Unhappily the Danish rulers, though they at once perceived the armament by which our demand was supported to be overpowering, nevertheless thought their honour concerned in resisting it, and we were compelled to bombard their capital. Then when, to satisfy this false point of honour, many houses and much property had been destroyed, and many lives, more valuable than either, had been sacrificed, the Crown Prince yielded. A few of his ships, as not being seaworthy, were destroyed, and the rest, amounting, including gunboats, to above sixty sail, were brought to England.

This achievement could not be said to add to our enemies; in fact the chief reason why it exasperated those who already were such was that it prevented the addition on which they had calculated being made to their number. But on the opposite side of the world an occurrence took place which seemed likely for a moment to involve us in war with a nation that had only an indirect concern in the war which was raging in Europe. The decrees which the French Emperor had issued, and had compelled his allies to issue, respecting commerce, and the Orders in Council with which Lord Grenville's Government had retaliated, had proved

a great obstacle to the carrying trade of the United States. If the question had been looked at fairly, it must have been seen by the most prejudiced observer that France, not England, was the original cause of the vexations which the Americans experienced, since it was Napoleon who had set the example of interference with such matters by the establishment of regulations which there was no precedent to justify. But it was England which was chiefly regarded with ill will by the Americans, because, while France was unable to enforce its orders, we both could and did compel the observance of ours; while another source of disagreement between us was found in the number of British seamen who were serving in ships belonging to the United States, and whom our captains claimed a right to search for and carry off. On one occasion in the early part of this year the advance of this pretension had led to a collision between men-of-war of the two nations, the *Leopard*, a British 50-gun ship, having fired into the American frigate *Chesapeake*; on which the President of the United States, Mr. Jefferson, who was generally understood to be unfriendly to this kingdom, issued a proclamation commanding all British ships at once to quit the American harbours, and to abstain from entering them in future. The feeling of our Government on first hearing of this transaction cannot be better shown than in the following extract of a letter from Lord Hawkesbury:

The American Government, in consequence of the action between the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake*, have issued a proclamation prohibiting the armed vessels of this country from entering their ports or harbours. We have as yet received no official communication on the subject, except a note from Mr. Munro, the American minister here, written, as he avows, without any authority from his Government, but only in consequence of the notoriety of the transaction. The civilians are of opinion that Admiral Berkeley was not justified in his orders, which authorised the *searching a man-of-war for deserters*; but that, on the other hand, if there really were

deserters from our ships in the American service, the American Government were bound, on representation, to *discharge them*. We are not sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances of the case to be able to decide on the exact application of these principles to the case itself: but it will be thought right to send a respectable naval force to America, with a minister authorised to enter into explanations on the subject, provided the American Government revoke their prohibitions; but, in the event of their refusal, with full power to commence hostilities. There appears to exist no doubt that the exclusion of the ships of war of one belligerent from these ports whilst those of the other are admitted is a violation of neutrality to which the country cannot submit. How this business will end it is impossible to say. An American war, in addition to all our other difficulties, would certainly be an evil at the present moment; but experience has proved that we shall not avoid it by unbecoming concessions, and the losses, if it shall occur, will fall more heavily upon the Americans than upon the people of this country.

We were certainly very near a war when the minister whom we sent out to negotiate had authority, under certain circumstances, to declare it. It was averted for a moment, partly by the exertions of the diplomatists on each side, and partly in consequence of the expiration of Mr. Jefferson's term of office, and of his successor, Mr. Madison, being a man of more pacific temper. But the cause of discontent remained. Since we refused to withdraw our Orders in Council, Mr. Madison was compelled by the public feeling in the United States to maintain the order of his predecessor, known on his side of the Atlantic as the Non-Intercourse Act; and, as the consequence was the cessation of all traffic between the countries, a mutual animosity was engendered and kept up, till, when Lord Hawkesbury himself was the British Prime Minister, it broke out, as will be mentioned hereafter, in formal war.

Matters such as these were not in Lord Hawkesbury's

department, and are mentioned here chiefly because, when Parliament reassembled, it was on him that the task of defending the measures of the entire Government devolved. But the affairs which, during his first months of office, principally caused him trouble and embarrassment, were also such as a Home Secretary is not usually called on to interfere with, and which, if they made no call on his statesmanlike ability, eminently required those other qualities with which he was endowed, firmness, temper, and courtesy, to enable him to steer through them without discredit or offence. In the preceding summer, under the last Administration, the quarrels between the Prince of Wales and his Princess had acquired a more public notoriety than before, from the Prince bringing against his wife a formal charge of infidelity. In this instance no blame attaches to him, because the reports of her misconduct, and of her having even given the Princess Charlotte a brother, were so rife that to examine into their truth had become a constitutional necessity. The investigation had been entrusted by Lord Grenville to a Commission of four noblemen,<sup>1</sup> with which no fault could be found but that they all belonged to one party, and that the one with which the Prince himself was politically connected. Their labours were not protracted; at the end of a few weeks they presented their report, which acquitted the Princess of everything but extreme indiscretion. But when she demanded that her formal acquittal should be ratified by the King admitting her to his Court, from which, while her conduct was the subject of enquiry, she had been excluded, compliance with her demand was eluded under a variety of pretences, which showed how little the Cabinet, which furnished the whole body of Commissioners, exercised the impartiality which it had been, at all events, the first duty of that section of it to observe. It was not till the Princess threatened to publish to the world her

<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners were Lord Erskine, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Grenville, and Lord Spencer, all members of the Whig Cabinet.



own version not only of the recent investigation, but of the recriminatory charges which she conceived herself justified in bringing, and able to establish, against her husband, that Lord Grenville's Cabinet promised that the King should receive her; and, when they had made the promise, they took care to hinder its fulfilment; so that, on the accession of the Tories to office, they found the whole affair in the most unsatisfactory state possible.

The Princess having been pronounced innocent, but being still treated as if she were guilty, they at once applied themselves to do away with an inconsistency which seemed calculated to throw a doubt on the equity of the King himself. They reported to his Majesty, as their unanimous opinion, that the Princess was, as a necessary result of the report of the Commissioners, entitled to be "admitted, with as little delay as possible into his Majesty's royal presence, and to be received in a manner due to her rank and station in his Majesty's Court." And it was on Lord Hawkesbury that the task devolved of announcing, not only the opinion of the Ministry to the King, but the decision to which the King had in consequence come to both the Prince and Princess. As the resolutions thus adopted were agreeable to no one (not to the King, for the reception of the Princess, under the circumstances, could hardly fail to embarrass and agitate him; nor to the Prince, who was compelled to acquiesce in the establishment of his wife's innocence, and in her consequent reception at Court; nor to the Princess herself, who must have felt herself, though formally acquitted of criminality, but insufficiently cleared of suspicion, and received at Court rather on sufferance than cordially or honorably), it was not a very pleasant nor easy task to communicate them to the different parties. But Lord Hawkesbury contrived to execute this difficult and delicate task in such a manner as not to lose the esteem or good will of either. It added to the difficulty of his task that the Prince would not accept the acquittal of the Princess with a good grace, nor abstain from insisting, to the fullest



extent, on his right as a father to regulate her intercourse with their daughter; and that the Princess, with inexplicable wrongheadedness, gave him some excuse for a part of the restrictions which he placed upon that intercourse by persisting in detaining about her person a boy whom she had adopted, and whose establishment in her house had probably been the origin of the chief accusation which had been brought against her; and, what was almost worse, considering the effect which any agitating circumstances were likely to have on the King's health, both still persisted in addressing themselves to him. The Prince insisted that he, as the sovereign and head of the family, should make himself the channel of communication to announce to the Princess his resolution that she should not visit their daughter at Warwick House, which had been recently fitted up for her, because he looked on it as a part of his own residence, Carlton House, with which, indeed, it had a communication. While the Princess, who had hitherto been living at Blackheath, wrote also to His Majesty, requesting that apartments might be assigned her at St. James's, in order that she might receive more frequent visits from her child; and the King, though deeply pained and shocked by the whole affair, yet wishing, as a father, to do his best to heal, or at least to veil, the scandal, as far as the case admitted, and being now under the guidance of advisers of real impartiality, complied, in a certain degree, with both their requests. He took on himself to write to the Princess to communicate to her the Prince's prohibition of her visits to Warwick House, not concealing from either that he "was not to be understood to give his sanction to such a rule, or to admit the reasons which appeared to have influenced the Prince in resolving to establish it." Indeed the deep regret which his letter also expressed, "that the result of the late enquiry had not had the happy effect of restoring personal harmony between the Prince and Princess," was manifestly a reproof to him rather than to the lady. And though he was

unable to comply with her request for apartments at St. James's Palace, which had no rooms suited for the purpose, he promised "to take immediate steps for her accommodation in one of the royal palaces," Kensington being indicated as the most suitable; adding that "a compliance with this request on his part had become the more urgently necessary from the determination taken by the Prince of Wales."

In this state the affair rested for some years. And if the settlement thus made had been final, we would gladly have passed over the whole affair in silence; but at a subsequent period the dispute between the royal pair was revived with the addition of so many fresh circumstances of pain and shame, and such universal notoriety, that suppression is impossible. Even the reputation of the Ministry became concerned in the truth being known; and nothing is left but to lament the melancholy series of misconduct and perversity by which a family scandal became inseparably connected with the national history.

As if no kind of extra official trouble was to be spared Lord Hawkesbury, before the end of the year the French prince, afterwards King Louis XVIII., unexpectedly arrived in England, travelling under the name of the Count de L'Isle. The circumstances which led to his doing so are best explained by the Count de L'Isle's letter to the King, and by a more detailed statement which he inclosed in a courteous note to Lord Hawkesbury :

*Letter from Louis XVIII. to the King.*

A Yarmouth, ce 2 Novembre, 1867.

MONSIEUR MON FRÈRE ET COUSIN,

Je ne puis laisser passer le premier moment où je mets pied à terre dans les États de Votre Majesté, sans la remercier de l'accueil qu'y reçoit le Comte de L'Isle. Je prononce exprès ce nom, parce que je n'en veux, ni n'en prétends un autre dans ces circonstances, ainsi que Votre Majesté en a pu juger par les démarches faites en même tems que ma lettre du 16 Octobre

lui a été remise. Un jour viendra, j'en ai le ferme espoir, où, avec l'appui de Votre Majesté et de sa généreuse nation, je pourrai prendre publiquement le titre qui m'appartient ; mais ce jour n'est pas venu, et en l'attendant il m'est à la fois doux et d'un bien favorable augure d'avoir un sentiment de reconnaissance à exprimer à Votre Majesté.

Je prends la liberté de recommander à sa bonté le Comte d'Avaray que je charge de cette lettre, mieux que personne il peut dire à Votre Majesté combien je lui suis sincèrement attaché.

Je prie Votre Majesté d'être bien convaincue de tous les sentimens avec lesquels je suis, Monsieur mon Frère et Cousin, &c. &c.

LOUIS.

*Statement enclosed in a Letter from Louis XVIII. to Lord Hawkesbury.*

Gosfield, le 18 Novembre, 1807.

Je suis parti de Mittau pour répondre à une invitation du Roi de Suède antérieure au siège de Stralsund, mais que cette circonstance ne rendoit pour moi que plus pressante. Le vent m'ayant empêché d'aborder à l'Isle de Rugen, et continuant à me repousser, j'ai pris le parti d'aller relâcher à Carlsrone, où le Roi, à la suite d'une maladie mortelle, m'avoit précédé. Dans mes conférences avec ce Prince, il m'a fortement conseillé de passer en Angleterre.

- 1°. Pour travailler à établir, plus solidement que jamais, avec le ministère, un accord ferme et permanent, qui seul peut mettre un terme aux malheurs de l'Europe.
- 2°. Pour anéantir les calomnies si favorables à l'usurpation, soldées par elle, et non moins injurieuses à moi-même qu'à mon frère, que nous pouvons marcher par des routes divergentes.
- 3°. Pour examiner par moi-même les projets et les moyens des chefs ou agents royalistes, et combiner leur travail avec celui d'une classe qui ne mérite pas moins de fixer l'attention et qui, dans Paris même, m'offre ses services.
- 4°. Pour attacher le dévouement et l'action de tous les bons François et la mienne propre aux efforts généreux de l'Angleterre

5°. Pour jouir de la satisfaction, étant réuni à mon frère, à mes neveux et à mes cousins, au milieu de mes serviteurs rassemblés en Angleterre, d'exprimer à George III et à sa nation ma gratitude de leur noble hospitalité envers les François fidèles.

A ces motifs s'en joignit un autre bien puissant, celui de confondre les malignes insinuations que je nourris des préventions contre le Gouvernement Britannique qui m'empêchent de m'entendre franchement avec lui.

Je déférai donc à l'avis de Gustave IV, si conforme à mes propres sentimens.

Ce premier point arrêté, nous pensâmes que si je demandois l'agrément de me rendre en Angleterre, j'occasionnerois plus d'embarras au gouvernement que par une arrivée subite et inattendue. Le Roi de Suède me conseilla donc ce dernier parti, et me fit conduire par une de ses frégates, convaincu qu'avec de pareils motifs l'étroite union qui existe entre Sa Majesté Britannique et lui sauroit tout ce qu'il pouvoit y avoir d'irrégulier dans cette marche.

Les vents qui m'avoient tant contrarié sur la Baltique me retinrent trois semaines à Gottembourg. Ayant dans cet intervalle acquis la certitude que ma prochaine arrivée était connue en Angleterre, et que désormais le secret convenu entre Gustave IV et moi étoit vain, je crus devoir par délicatesse même pour Sa Majesté Britannique ne pas garder plus longtems le silence, et en donnant avis de cette résolution au Roi de Suède, je confiai à un packet-boat que je supposois devoir arriver plus tôt que moi, la lettre du 16 Octobre que je m'étois proposé d'abord de n'écrire qu'en touchant les côtes de la Grande Bretagne.

Dans cette lettre j'ai exposé franchement au Roi les motifs de mon voyage, en parlant à ce Prince le même langage que j'ai tenu à tous les souverains et particulièrement à l'Empereur de Russie.

Sans m'arrêter à réfuter ici les interprétations données dans certains papiers à mes projets et à ma conduite, j'ajouterai que j'ai trop de confiance dans Sa Majesté Britannique et dans ses Ministres pour ne pas être certain qu'ils ne m'ont jamais supposé l'intention de vouloir chercher à les entraîner au-delà des mesures dictées par leur sagesse.

J'ai reçu avec autant de sensibilité que de reconnaissance l'offre que le Roi m'a faite du Palais d'Holyrood pour ma résidence et celle de ma famille. Si j'étois venu dans l'intention de chercher un asile, je m'en serois ouvert au cœur généreux de George III. Mais ayant laissé ma femme et la Duchesse d'Angoulême en Courlande, des motifs de délicatesse, et je puis dire de politique générale, que Sa Majesté Britannique et son cabinet peuvent apprécier, expliqueront en ce moment ma conduite.

D'après cet exposé sincère, et bien convaincu que dans les présentes circonstances une grande circonspection est requise, j'attendrai en silence et dans une parfaite sécurité le moment où les Ministres croiront utile de se mettre en communication directe avec moi. C'est dans cette résolution, et n'ayant jamais compté résider à Londres, mais ne voulant pas cependant abuser de l'obligeance du Marquis de Buckingham, que je compte sous peu de jours quitter Gosfield et prendre une maison pour l'hiver, sans aucun éclat, à portée de mes parens, de mes serviteurs et de ceux enfin qu'il m'est important d'écouter.

Je ne puis terminer cette note sans détruire par des faits la supposition accréditée, que j'avois prétendu réclamer le titre et les honneurs de la royauté. Mes instructions à mon frère et au Comte de la Châtre ; la lettre du Comte d'Avaray à M. d'Adlerberg, en date du 16 Octobre ; la mienne au Roi, en date de Yarmouth, retardée par une circonstance particulière à laquelle je suis étranger, enfin mon refus du salut de la frégate suédoise en quittant son bord, prouvent suffisamment que, dans ma volonté même, c'est le Comte de L'Isle, et non le Roi Très-Chrétien qui est venu descendre en Angleterre.

LOUIS.

As his arrival in this country implied an expectation that we should support the expense of his establishment, a duty of hospitality<sup>1</sup> from which, to the credit of all

<sup>1</sup> By an account found in Lord Hawkesbury's papers of the next year, 1808, it appears that, from the year 1794 to that time, the sums which had been voted by Parliament for the use of the French emigrants amounted to above two millions and three-quarters of morey

be it said, neither party was inclined to shrink, our liberality gave the Government a right in some degree to dictate the conditions under which it should be exercised ; especially the locality where the Prince's residence should be fixed. The inconveniences which might arise from his taking up his residence in or near London were obvious ; and George III. himself suggested his withdrawal to Scotland, proposing to have Holyrood Palace fitted up for his reception there. Lord Hawkesbury at once made the offer in the king's name. But though, at a later period, and after a second revolution, his younger brother thankfully chose Holyrood for his abode, Louis objected to it now. The Marquis of Buckingham placed one of his country seats at his disposal ; and, after some discussion, the resolution to which the Cabinet finally came was that, though the King had no other palace to offer, the prince might establish himself with his retinue, which was very numerous, in any part of the kingdom, provided it was not within fifty miles of the metropolis. He acquiesced with apparent thankfulness and complacency, and took up his residence at Gosfield ; but after a time some of his English visitors, apparently to annoy the Ministry, began to represent to him that any restriction on his place of abode or movements was an insulting interference, and to encourage him to disregard it ; and Lord Hawkesbury was compelled to announce that his nearer approach to the capital must be followed by a cessation of all communication between him and the Government. He had other difficulties also. The younger prince, Monsieur, afterwards Charles X. had been for some time in England : and, as soon as Louis arrived, the old jealousies between the two brothers, which had shown themselves so discredibly at Coblenz fifteen years before, were revived. A letter of Lord Liverpool's to his father, written the very week after Louis had landed at Yarmouth, shows how a community in misfortune had failed to reconcile the brothers ; while the



latter part of it throws some curious light on the affairs of Portugal, which in the ensuing year began to exercise a powerful influence on the affairs of all Europe:

We shall still have, I fear, a great deal of trouble with the French king and his attendants. They are at present at Gosfield. The Comte d'Avaray, who is the reputed minister, applied yesterday to be allowed to come to town, but leave was refused to him. I conclude Monsieur will return in a few days, and we shall then know with more certainty on what we have to rely. I have no doubt of his anxiety to get his brother out of the country, as far as he can manifest it without indecency. The brothers have always had two distinct parties; besides, Monsieur would not like to be eclipsed by the presence of his elder brother.

The fate of Portugal appears to be still uncertain. The Prince Regent professed his determination, by our last accounts, at all events to send his eldest son to the Brazils. You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that the Pope's nuncio at Lisbon has done everything in his power to persuade the Prince Regent himself and the whole royal family to go to the Brazils. He has represented to them in very strong terms the great advantages that would arise to the Catholic religion from the establishment of a powerful Catholic empire in that quarter of the world. The information we have received respecting his advice is undoubted; but it should be kept secret, for fear of compromising the Pope and his nuncio with Buonaparte.

But with his firm refusal to sanction any departure from the conditions laid down by the Cabinet for the French prince's residence among us, Lord Hawkesbury combined such evident sympathy with his position, and such an unmistakeable desire to consult his wishes in every way that did not threaten to open political discussions, which at that time could be neither useful nor seasonable, that Louis gradually learnt to acquiesce with entire cheerfulness in the path marked out for him. The condition as to the distance of his abode from London was slightly relaxed, and at last he settled quietly at Hartwell, a seat



belonging to the Marquis of Buckingham, near Aylesbury, and remained there till the train of events, of which the commencement is alluded to in the extract just given from Lord Hawkesbury's letter, replaced him on the throne of his ancestors.

Lord Hawkesbury's anticipations that the expedition against Denmark would be made the subject of a formidable attack by the Opposition were realized as soon as Parliament reassembled. Indeed, it may be said that the Ministry, who were, as they were entitled to be, proud of their conduct in every part of the transaction; of their vigilance and address in obtaining the earliest intelligence of the Treaty of Tilsit, with the existence and purport of the secret articles; of the decision and energy which they had displayed in counteracting the aims of their old and new enemies; and of the complete success which had crowned their efforts, challenged the criticism of their opponents by putting a congratulatory and exulting mention of the enterprise in the very front of the King's speech, and in the address which their adherents in both Houses proposed as a reply to it. It was a bold challenge, because, though they had in their possession a most convincing and irresistible argument in the secret articles, it was one which they were resolved that no consideration of self-justification should tempt them to use; which indeed they could not use without ensuring the ruin of the agent to whose timely information they were indebted for their knowledge of them; and with his ruin the destruction to the country of all means of acquiring similar information hereafter. If they withheld that absolute proof of the propriety of their conduct, they must rely for their justification on general policy; on the knowledge that all who were not wilfully blind possessed of the strength of France, of the weakness of Denmark, and of the way in which the ruler of France was sure, sooner or later, to avail himself of the inability of Denmark, and of all countries situated as Denmark was situated, to resist his commands; and, above all, on their

own characters not only as able statesmen, but as honest men, who would neither assert their knowledge of what they did not know, nor wantonly oppress a nation whose prudence or whose weakness might suggest to it the observance of an honest neutrality, much less one whom there were many reasons to regard as a secret well-wisher.

Their conduct was discussed not fewer than three times. First on the address; again on a motion made by the Duke of Norfolk for papers "to throw more light on the motives which induced the ministers to propose and undertake the expedition;" and lastly on a proposal of Lord Darnley's to address the King with a formal condemnation of the conduct of the Ministry, which was met by Lord Eliot by a motion for an address signifying the highest approval of their "prompt and vigorous measures." But, as on a former occasion, it will be more convenient to look on the different discussions as parts of one prolonged debate. It was somewhat singular that the peer who, on the first occasion, put himself forward as the leader of the Opposition was Lord Sidmouth. But the chief argument on which he rested his condemnation of the Ministry was, in fact, the highest compliment that could be paid to them. He reminded his brother peers of the date of the Treaty of Tilsit, the 7th of July, of the date of the entrance of our irresistible armament into the Baltic, the 3d of August, and he contended that these dates were "alone sufficient to prove that the ministers were not acting upon any information which they had obtained of the secret engagements entered into between France and Russia; and in which they would have it understood that Denmark concurred." The ministers had never alleged or supposed that Denmark had concurred, or had been invited to concur, in the secret articles; they merely affirmed, what was patent to the meanest comprehension, that Denmark was not strong enough to refuse an invitation which was likely to be pressed on her by neighbours of a strength so disproportion-

tioned to her own. But Lord Sidmouth's denial that their act of the 3d of August, or rather of a week earlier (since, as has been mentioned before, it was on the 27th of July that our expedition sailed), could possibly have been the consequence of their knowledge of a transaction which was only completed at a great distance from our shores on the 7th of the same month, did in fact only prove that, Prime Minister though he had been, he was still utterly ignorant of the resources which, at such a crisis, energetic rulers could put forth to obtain information ; and that he was still more unable to appreciate or even believe in the vigour and promptitude with which men deserving the name of statesmen, deserving to have the destinies of a nation committed to their care, can act on intelligence, however unexpected. Lord Grenville in one respect even went beyond Lord Sidmouth, for in the debate on the address he ventured to allege that, when "the ministers had asserted that there were secret articles in the Treaty of Tilsit, affecting the interests of this country, and the French had asserted that there were none, that denial of the French Government was a challenge, and it was incumbent upon ministers to prove their assertion ; and that, as they had not attempted to prove it, they had given it up." It was easy to demolish an antagonist who could make it a charge against the ministers that they had not chosen to give formal satisfaction and proof to an enemy of the truth of their assertions, when the very act of which he was complaining was founded on the circumstance that he required no proof from us, but had it in his own possession ; when in fact the very ability to give the proof demanded of itself made the proof unnecessary. And in the very same breath Lord Grenville admitted that "it was laid down by the most approved writers on the law of nations that, where you had certain evidence of the intention of an enemy to seize upon a neutral territory, neutral vessels, or property (such neutral being incapable of resisting), and thereby to place you in imminent danger, you have a right

to seize such neutral territory, vessels, or property, in order to ensure your own safety." Lord Hutchinson, a general officer who had been employed on a mission to the court of the Czar at the time, joined in the attack on the Ministry, though the chief reason he alleged for his opinion was a singular one, being founded on the great indignation which Alexander had expressed at our conduct. Lord Moira also condemned it, arguing that Denmark would have persisted in maintaining its neutrality, and that neither France nor Russia could "have followed them to the island of Zealand," to compel them to abandon it; and Lord Grey, after adopting this opinion from Lord Moira, followed Lord Grenville in another argument, and asserted that dates proved "that it was morally and physically impossible that the declaration put into the mouth of the King could be true," or that the order for the expedition against Denmark could have been the consequence of the Treaty of Tilsit. He, too, dwelt on the displeasure with which the Emperor of Russia had viewed our conduct; and pronounced that the ministers only refused to give "precise information because they felt that they had immolated the honour of their country;" and Lord Erskine, it may be almost said, went further than he in the positiveness with which he took on himself to deny that any information about the secret articles had ever been received at all. One more speaker on the same side deserves to be noticed, because he was the nephew of Fox, and would have been his successor at the Foreign Office if it had been thought judicious by his party to be guided by the partiality of the dying statesman in a matter of such importance. He not only endorsed all the allegations of former speakers that "the ministers were incapable of supporting the assertions which they had put into the King's speech by the least shadow of evidence;" but also ventured on the declaration that, even if France had succeeded in overbearing Denmark's resolution to preserve a neutrality, the acquisition of the Danish fleet could have been of no service to her; could neither have

materially injured this country, nor increased our danger of invasion.

Against this combined attack of many parties the ministers had the aid of the great statesman who, by his own foresight and energy, had greatly extended and strengthened our dominion in India ; and was therefore pre-eminently qualified to appreciate such qualities in the Home Government, the Marquis Wellesley. He reviewed the whole scheme of Napoleon's policy, his hatred of England ; laying it down as an undeniable proposition that the battle of Friedland, and its result, the alliance between France and Russia, would, beyond "all question, lead to his immediately turning his whole power against ourselves ;" and contended that no proof could be wanted of "his intention to destroy and annihilate our independence, nay, our very existence as a nation." But, besides that the present narrative is concerned chiefly with the language of Lord Hawkesbury, we may the more fitly confine ourselves to his speech on this occasion, because it was the one which entered most closely into what may be called the personal defence of the ministers.

He disdained to notice with any particular refutation the arguments by which his opponents had attempted to show that the expedition to the Baltic had not been really decided on in consequence of the transactions at Tilsit. He took, as became the organ of the Government, the high ground that "what his Majesty's speech stated as a fact they were bound to believe. It was not unusual for Parliament to act upon a fact distinctly stated to them by the ministers of the Crown ; and they had a right to have their statements as to a matter of fact accepted with confidence. But in this instance the truth of those statements had been corroborated by others than the ministers themselves. It had been corroborated by the Portuguese Government, which, before the result of the expedition to Copenhagen was known, the allies of Tilsit had required to make common cause with them against England, and to unite its

fleet to theirs, in order that the confederacy might thus be enabled to make a general attack on these islands. It was confirmed by the testimony of different persons in Ireland, where, strange to say, all the designs and projects of the enemy were most speedily known, and where it was promised that the combined fleets of Spain, Portugal, and Denmark would make a descent on both the British islands." He skilfully availed himself of Lord Grenville's admission that there might be circumstances in which our own personal safety would justify a disregard of the strict rights of a neutral nation which wanted the power requisite to enable it to preserve its neutrality, and affirmed that the whole case rested on the answers to be given to these questions: "1. Whether the House believed that there was a design on the part of the enemy to form a great maritime confederacy against this country, and to seize the fleet of Denmark to effect this purpose? 2. Whether it was practicable for him to carry this design into execution either by absolute force or intimidation? 3. Whether the object was of sufficient magnitude and importance to justify a deviation from the ordinary rules of proceeding? As to the first question, even without the Treaty of Tilsit and its secret articles, no one could possibly doubt the intention of the present ruler of France. He never concealed it. It was expressly stated in the official journals of that country. As to the second, the present unexampled condition of the Continent was an equally undeniable proof of his power to form such a confederacy. The events of the last two years, which had prostrated at his feet all Austria, Russia, and Prussia, had left no power on the Continent to which Denmark could look for the slightest support, and had produced a state of affairs which no one, whether statesman or political writer, had ever witnessed or imagined before. It was idle to speak of Denmark as able to resist the compulsion which France might desire to put upon her, because there might be difficulties in the way of pouring a French army into Zealand from Holstein. The Crown



Prince himself had confessed that in 1801 Denmark had no means of resisting the demands of Russia. How then could it be seriously pretended that she could now resist Russia and France united? When both these questions were thus answered, when it was admitted or proved that France had the desire to form a confederacy against us, and the power to compel Denmark to join it, the answer to the third question, turning on the importance of the object attained by our expedition, could be no matter of doubt. The expedition had at once disabled an entire fleet in so advanced a state of preparation that in six weeks it was got ready for service. It was therefore necessary for safety. It had been adopted and carried out with a celerity the Opposition might not be able to appreciate; but that celerity was indispensable to its success. To have given an hour to preliminary negotiation before despatching our fleet would have shown the enemy that their intentions were discovered, and would have thus enabled them at least to increase our difficulties, if not altogether to baffle our exertions. Lord Hutchinson had alleged that our proceedings had excited a general feeling of disgust throughout Europe. Lord Hawkesbury denied it. Had it disgusted Sweden, where the King still preferred our alliance? or Portugal, whose Court still looked on us as its only protectors? He would even venture to ask, Had it even offended the nation of Russia? For there also, as he was informed by credible witnesses, the mass of the people considered our act as a necessary measure of self-defence. No doubt those nations which were under the domination of France were obliged to express whatever sentiments the ruler of France thought fit to prescribe for them. Finally, he affirmed that the safety not only of this nation, but of the whole world, had required the measure which we had adopted. Nothing prevented France from acquiring universal dominion but the naval power of Great Britain. That alone formed the security of the whole globe. It was indeed no ordinary step that had been taken; but was it



an ordinary situation of affairs when, except France, we ourselves were the only independent nation in Europe? Two sources of the power of the enemy had been intended to be the navy of Denmark and the navy of Portugal. They were both happily removed out of his grasp. Those who formed a correct estimate of the power of France, and considered at the same time that personal preservation was the first law of nature, must agree that the ministers had averted a great danger from the country, and, in doing so, had acted with all the mildness that the case permitted."

Apart from the cogency of the speaker's arguments, their manly tone, and the distinctness with which he rested his cause, in the first place, on the ministers' right to expect complete reliance on their assurance that they had received such and such information from a trustworthy source, was well calculated to win the favour of his hearers. And to such a degree did he carry the House with him that his opponents could barely muster fifty votes to support them in their attack upon the Ministry, which they now therefore found they had strengthened rather than injured.

Among the statements which Lord Hawkesbury had advanced in confirmation of the accuracy of their intelligence one was, that the junction of the Danish with the French fleet for the invasion of this kingdom had been expected in Ireland; and a great portion of his attention throughout the year was occupied by the condition of that part of the kingdom, where the agitation which had hitherto shown itself in occasional feverish outbreaks was now acquiring a settled organization and a permanent character, which even the concession of its original demand for emancipation has not yet extinguished. Its first ostensible object was one in which religion and politics were mingled; Catholic emancipation, to use the brief and comprehensive term by which it was usually described. But with this another soon became combined, and the lower classes, who were nearly all Roman Catholics, had learnt to be almost equally eager for the transfer of their

allegiance to France. As early as the middle of the preceding summer some of the resident officers of the Government in Dublin had reported to Lord Hawkesbury that "the whole middle and lower class in Ireland was decidedly hostile to the Government and to the English connexion; that the people, even the labouring poor, talked and thought of nothing but Buonaparte's successes on the Continent, and relied with certainty on his invading their country and separating it from England; the poor saying that they could not lose, and that they believed they should gain, by the change." And a fresh association was formed to promote both objects, the attainment of civil equality and the French invasion, by a system of outrage and terror. The members took the name of "the Liberty Rangers," announcing their resolution to be "to effect all that the Croppies had failed to achieve in the year 1798." The higher classes among the Roman Catholics were not, except perhaps in very rare instances, acquainted with the treasonable part of these designs, but they were so intemperate in their prosecution of emancipation that one gentleman, a Mr. Keogh of Mountjerome, openly denounced the warmest and ablest of their advocates in Parliament, Curran, the Irish Master of the Rolls, and Grattan, whose name requires no further description, for treachery to their cause, because they had expressed disapproval of the violence of the language which they introduced into an intended petition. In such a posture of affairs it was necessary to strengthen the hands of the Executive in Ireland by measures of military precaution, since any steps in the direction of indulgence or liberty would be liable to be misinterpreted and ascribed to fear, if the Government did not first show itself able to put down disaffection with the strong hand.

It happened that the two colleagues whose departments most closely connected them with the Home Secretary on these subjects were both Irishmen; Lord Castlereagh was Secretary at War, Sir Arthur Wellesley was Secretary for

Ireland. The latter had also been a member of the Irish House of Commons. And the intimate acquaintance which both necessarily had with the country peculiarly qualified them to judge of Lord Hawkesbury's plans. One part of these was calculated at once to meet the danger of an outbreak at home, and of invasion from abroad. He suggested the propriety of fortifying some of the most important and most assailable points, especially Cork and Dublin; and Cork he proposed to make a large military depôt, a step which, as he pointed out to Wellesley, the situation of the town would hereafter make "very convenient for the despatch of speedy and secret reinforcements to any armies that might be employed anywhere to the westward or the southward." It is a singular coincidence that Sir Arthur himself subsequently proved to be the general whose army derived the greatest advantage from this piece of foresight. As a member of Addington's Administration Lord Hawkesbury had devoted a great deal of attention to increasing the efficiency of the London police. He had resumed the task when he returned to office; and he now wrote to Wellesley to recommend him without delay to take measures for assimilating the police in Dublin, and if possible in the other great towns of Ireland, to that of Westminster, entering into the minutest details with a precision which no one was better able to appreciate than his correspondent, and to which indeed he could find a close resemblance in his own habits.

And besides, and as a sort of counterbalance to these measures of repression, Lord Hawkesbury had in contemplation others which could not fail to be regarded as favours and indulgences by the Roman Catholics, if they would compare what was offered, not with any imaginary concessions which might be required to place them on a footing of equality with the Church of England, but with what they had hitherto enjoyed, and with what was necessary for the full efficiency of their Church in Ireland. He proposed to augment the grant which had hitherto been calculated

to support 200 students at Maynooth, by a sum sufficient to increase that number by a fourth ; while, at the same time, since nothing was further from his intention than to favour or promote the vigour of one Church at the expense of the other, he desired Sir Arthur to procure him, respecting the "existing establishment of Protestant charter schools," which was said to be very defective, "such information as might enable the Government to take judicious steps for improving their organization and extending their usefulness ; steps which it was especially incumbent on them to take at "a time when they were contemplating so large an increase of an institution for the education of Catholics." It was to a certain extent as a measure acceptable to the professors of both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic forms that he finally desired Sir Arthur to consult the Primate, the Lord Chancellor, and any other persons of sufficient judgment and authority, on the possibility of devising some satisfactory measure for the commutation of tithes : always "bearing this in mind, that no system of commutation ought for a moment to be entertained that did not give to the clergy the same security which they enjoyed at the present moment ; that is, the security of the land."

The measure last mentioned was unavoidably postponed for many years ; but it is no slight proof of Lord Hawkesbury's sagacity, that when tithes were at last commuted, both in England and Ireland, the principle on which the commutation was effected was that indicated in the letter of instructions from which this extract has been quoted. The majority of the other measures were at once carried out ; but it cannot be said that they were followed by the consequences which they deserved of allaying disaffection. On the contrary, the willingness shown by the Ministry to make some concessions rather encouraged the Roman Catholic priesthood to insist on more. And in one instance, that of allowing the King a veto on the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops, which the chief authorities of

their Church had previously consented to sanction, they played fast and loose with their own supporters, repudiating conditions to which they had formally agreed, in a manner which drew down a warm denunciation of their bad faith from so steady a partisan of their cause, on the general principles of toleration, as Lord Grey.

Yet, in spite of the notorious disloyalty of the bulk of the Irish Roman Catholics at that time, of the equally undeniable bad faith of their prelates and leaders, and in spite too of his own knowledge of the unalterable resolution of the King to consent to no relaxation of the existing laws on the subject, Lord Grenville thought every consideration so secondary to that of embarrassing the Government that he again presented a petition from the Roman Catholics, and moved for referring it to a committee; supporting his motion by the same arguments that he had used before; and unfortunately provoking Lord Hawkesbury to rest his opposition to it still more positively and emphatically than before on a principle from which he could hardly depart or swerve. He now affirmed his "conviction that a Protestant Government alone was consistent with the laws and constitution of the British empire," and maintained that the oath which barred the Houses of Parliament and the great offices of State against the Roman Catholics was "a test with which, consistently with the security of the Protestant Government and Protestant Establishment, it was impossible to dispense."

In one important particular, that of union, the Roman Catholics were stronger than they had been before, as those in England, who had hitherto held aloof from their Irish brethren, had now come to the resolution of combining with them, and despatched an agent to Ireland to arrange a system of co-operation.<sup>1</sup> But it did not assist them in

<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Wellesley, who communicated this fact to Lord Hawkesbury, makes a curious comment on it. "The Irish appear to hope to derive some advantage from this union of interests, of which it can only be said that, if it should be made, it will inoculate them with more

the Parliamentary divisions. Lord Grenville was defeated by eighty-seven ; and in the House of Commons, where a motion similar to his was brought forward by Grattan, and enforced in one of his finest speeches, even Canning, who was as favorable to the principle of emancipation as Pitt had been, spoke and voted against it, though his reasons were founded solely on the unreasonableness of pressing a request, however reasonable, at a time when those who urged it knew a compliance with it to be impracticable. If, as with the history of the next twenty years before us it seems impossible to doubt, the long postponement of the settlement of so agitating a question was a great misfortune, those who opposed it, like Lord Hawkesbury, are scarcely more responsible or blameable for the protraction of the agitation than those professed champions of the Roman Catholics who, by their untimely and factious advocacy, drove their opponents to rest their opposition to their claims on grounds from which it was hardly possible for them to recede with plausibility, or even decency.

Scotland had long ceased to cause anxiety to its governors from the same causes as Ireland ; but, perhaps from the necessity under which the Government had at one time found itself of lavishing the public money among the chieftains of the clans, there was no quarter of the King's dominions in which jobbery was more rife. And an attempt to induce Lord Hawkesbury to countenance what was delicately called an arrangement, though unimportant in itself after the transaction was over, seems worth preserving from the broad principles which it led him to announce as his rule in the dispensation of patronage, in which, as will be seen hereafter, when he became the head of the Government, few ministers have ever been equally scrupulous. Some changes in the organization of the chief courts of judicature were contemplated, and in religion, and may have the effect of moderating their party violence ; at all events it will give us an additional channel for knowing their secrets."



nexion with them one of the chief judges wished to retire, endeavouring to make a stipulation not only that he should receive a pension, to which from his length of service he was amply entitled, but that the vacancy on the judicial bench should be filled by his own son; and great interest, of the kind which is apt to be most influential with ministers, was exerted to induce their compliance with this condition. In reply to this proposal Lord Hawkesbury writes: "There will be every disposition to consider the claims of Mr. — at a proper opportunity, but we are convinced that it is of the utmost importance, with a view to the new system of judicature which is about to be introduced in Scotland, that any arrangement which grows out of it should be free from even the appearance of any personal object, and should rest exclusively on public grounds. I have no difficulty, therefore, in saying that if Mr. —'s claims to the bench were equal, in all respects, to those of any other person at the bar in Scotland, it would be more advisable, even in that case, that his pretensions should be postponed till another vacancy. I am confident that, if the bench of judges in England enjoys a degree of respect and confidence which it possesses in no other country, it owes it in a great measure to the scrupulous delicacy which prevails in all the arrangements respecting it; and I can say from my own knowledge that ever since the union with Ireland the same principles have been adopted with respect to the courts of justice in that country as have been found by experience so beneficial in England." A few months later he had to withstand some peculiarly pressing solicitations of the same kind in England from a supporter whom it was especially difficult to refuse, and his language was that, in all cases of a vacancy on the judicial bench, "the person best qualified, whoever he might be, would be appointed, without any regard to favour or political arrangement." And in a similar spirit, when two prelates of noble birth and great family influence were entreating their translation to more lucrative sees, he wrote



to the Lord Lieutenant to disregard both their claims. "He was only anxious," he said, "for the most proper person, and the most creditable appointment." He suggested the name of another bishop, wholly unknown to himself, solely on the ground of his reputation "as a hard-working prelate and a considerable scholar," adding what, if it had been known, might have led to some diminution of the solicitations on these subjects, that "the fact of his not having applied for promotion, if it were right to call it such, was, in his judgment, no objection whatever; on the contrary, if he was the proper person, rather a recommendation."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Napoleon's invasion of the Peninsula—Sir A. Wellesley is sent to Portugal—Commencement of the Peninsular War—Lord Grenville's attack on our policy in engaging in that war—Death of the first Lord Liverpool—Lord Liverpool's defence of the Ministry—Conduct of the French princes—Lord Liverpool's memorandum on the Walcheren expedition—Quarrel between Lord Castlereagh and Canning—Resignation of the Duke of Portland—Letter from Mr. Perceval—He becomes Prime Minister—Lord Liverpool becomes Secretary of State for War and the Colonies—He recommends the evacuation of Walcheren—Contest for the Chancellorship of Oxford—Lord Liverpool's views as to the maintenance of the Peninsular War, and his letter to Lord Wellington.

THE autumn of 1808 had seen the commencement of a new stage of the war. After the battle of Friedland all Europe to the east of the Rhine was prostrate at the feet of Napoleon, and he was thus left at leisure to direct his attention to the countries on the other side of France, beyond the Pyrenees. Neither of the Peninsular kingdoms was in a condition to make a long resistance to his first attack. The royal family of Portugal fled from Lisbon to take refuge in their American dominions, and even before the close of 1807 the French marshal Junot led an army across the frontier, and, meeting with no resistance, in a few days made himself master of the whole country. At the beginning of 1808 a second French army invaded Spain; Charles IV. abdicated the throne in favour of his son, who was first proclaimed King as Ferdinand VII.; was next persuaded by Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law, to enter

France for the purpose of a conference with the French Emperor; and was then seized, and compelled to resign all pretensions to the throne; while the crown, which he could scarcely be said to have worn, was transferred to Napoleon's brother Joseph. That prince had not long before been invested with the kingdom of Naples by the same authority; and, in order that Murat too might wear a diadem, was now transferred, not altogether with his own consent, to Madrid.

But the Spaniards did not acquiesce in the new dynasty as easily as the Neapolitans. Fallen as they were from their ancient heroism and renown, they had yet honour enough left to resent the shameless trickery of which their sovereigns, however unworthy they had shown themselves, had been the victims, and courage sufficient to rouse them to defy the invader of their own rights, the usurper of their king's prerogatives. Their first steps in the way of resistance were singularly successful. It was hardly a month after Joseph had been recognised by the Notables as their king, when, on the 21st July, a French army was surrounded at Baylen, and compelled to an inglorious capitulation; while in Portugal events were equally unfavourable to the common enemy. The overthrow of the two Peninsular kingdoms without a shadow of pretext for hostilities had kindled a flame of universal indignation throughout Britain. The very pusillanimity and imbecility of the sovereigns had augmented our sympathy for the people. The moment that intelligence reached our shores of the rising of the Spaniards against their new rulers, we determined on aiding them, and a small force was placed under the command of Sir A. Wellesley, who, by his skilful management of the attack on Copenhagen, had shown that his military genius was not confined to the requirements of Indian warfare. A fortnight after Dupont had surrendered at Baylen, Wellesley landed in Mondego Bay, between Oporto and Lisbon. Before the end of August he had defeated Junot in one skirmish and one

pitched battle, and had the means at his command for driving him in ignominious retreat out of Portugal, when fresh commanders arrived from England, to prevent his reaping the full harvest of fame which he had deserved. They preferred negotiations to the vigorous pursuit which he recommended: but even their diplomacy, feeble as it was, compelled the French to evacuate Portugal, and to leave the Russian fleet, which had sailed to the Tagus to co-operate with them, to become our prize. The generals were all recalled, and the army was placed under the command of Sir John Moore, who in the course of the autumn received reinforcements which emboldened him to undertake measures of active offence. Leaving one division for the protection of Portugal, he advanced into Spain with the remainder, in the hope of being able to aid the citizens of Madrid, who were making enthusiastic preparations for the defence of their capital. But the check which his arms had received was sufficient to bring Napoleon himself across the Pyrenees; and the forces which he assembled were so overpowering in number that he had no difficulty in compelling the British general to retreat. Nor was it without some difficulty and hardship that, with sadly diminished numbers, Moore reached the harbour of Corunna. There he turned to bay, repulsed Soult, to whom Napoleon had entrusted the last stages of the pursuit, in a hard-fought battle, in which he purchased the victory at the cost of his own life, while the discomfiture of the enemy enabled the army to re-embark in safety.

It returned to England; but the success of Wellesley in the autumn, and even the importance which Napoleon had been seen to attach to Moore's operations, premature as they were, plainly showed to the ministers that they had at length found a field on which the British armies could act with advantage to the common cause. And they resolved to send Wellesley back to Portugal, which he himself pronounced to be the fittest country for the base of his operations. He reached the Tagus at the latter end

of April, 1809, and from that time the history of the war, as far as England was concerned, is identified with his career of steady progress and unimpaired triumph. But if Lord Grenville had been listened to, those campaigns, the most glorious in the records of the British army, would never have been commenced. The instant that Parliament met, he took the opportunity of denouncing the conduct of the Ministry, both in its past acts and its present projects. In the autumn Napoleon and Alexander had transmitted to this country a joint proposal for the restoration of peace, in language which showed the resolution of the French ruler to retain his hold upon Spain, and of the Russian Emperor to assist him to the utmost in so doing; the Spaniards, who were in arms for the rights of their native sovereign, being characterised as insurgents. We refused to enter into a negotiation which should involve the abandonment of their cause; and though Lord Grenville admitted the insincerity of Napoleon's proposals, he nevertheless pronounced our implied demand, that he should withdraw his brother from the Spanish throne, as "unreasonable." The further maintenance of a British force in the Peninsula he pronounced to be a "committal of the country to a hopeless contest, in which success could not be the reward of valour." Nor were the consequences to be limited to the disasters of our army. "He had no hesitation in declaring that, if the system hitherto acted on were to be further pursued, the destruction of this monarchy was inevitable, and that we should soon be reduced to the same condition with Prussia and the conquered states of the Continent."

The history of Parliamentary faction has preserved but few instances of any one who made any pretence to statesmanship committing himself to a prophecy which the event so signally falsified; and the Secretary of State, who by the recent death of his father had now become Earl of Liverpool, had no difficulty in convincing the House that his own view of the state of affairs was the more

sound when he affirmed, in express contradiction of the preceding speaker's opinion, that "it was difficult to conceive any situation which would better warrant hopes of ultimate success than that of Spain at the present day. The people were unanimous in their resistance to the invader, and it was the only instance since the first outbreak of the French Revolution in which a whole people had taken up arms in their own defence, while the country itself possessed many local advantages in favour of the natives and their allies against any invader." He was at least equally supported by the general feeling both of his brother peers and of the nation at large, when he contended that the ground on which we had rested our recent rejection of the French and Russian proposals, namely, a refusal to admit that the Spaniards, who were in arms for their hereditary sovereigns, were insurgents, and that Joseph Buonaparte was the legitimate King of the country, was the only ground consistent with the honour and reputation of the country. In fact, on neither of the occasions when Lord Grenville pronounced his condemnation of the conduct of the Government did he venture to invite the judgment of the House by a division. And the next attack on the policy of the Government came from Lord Grey.

He was hardly as comprehensive in his condemnation of it as his colleague, who had "declared sincerely that not one measure had been adopted by the ministers which, had he been in their situation, he would have thought it right to resort to." But he was bolder even than he; for he ventured to deliver his opinion on matters of military science and on the generalship of Wellesley, condemning him even for the victory of Vimiero, on the ground that to fight a battle at all was "to incur a hazard which he ought not to have done." And he summed up his view of all the transactions in the Peninsula in an address, in which he proposed to represent to the King that "disgrace had been brought on his Majesty's councils, and injury sustained by the British empire: that no just view had been taken

of the political situation of either Spain or Portugal: . . . . nor had any due attention been paid to the supply of those means which alone could have enabled the British armies to act with a reasonable hope of success."

Lord Liverpool, as he had ventured to do even when Pitt was the assailant, met the attack on the Government boldly, in the directest manner, admitting their entire responsibility; and invited the judgment of the House and of the country on every part of their conduct. Lord Grey "had declared it to be his opinion that ministers ought to have waited to ascertain the probability of the success of the cause of patriotism in Spain, before they offered the Spaniards assistance. What? when the feeling of resistance was so strong and so general in Spain, would it have been honorable to the British character to say to the gallant Spaniards: 'We will not give you aid while you are in want of it, while your efforts at emancipation are in infancy. We will defer our assistance till you are in full strength, and have no need of it?' Had such been the language of the ministers, they would indeed have deserved the reprobation of every man in the country. It was remarkable that each individual who censured their conduct had a plan of his own; but none of these plans had a single principle of agreement with each other, a fact which showed the greatness of the difficulties under which the ministers themselves must have laboured in forming their own plans. But, with respect to the plan which they had adopted, he undertook to establish two points: firstly, that it was the most wise and expedient that could have been adopted in the view in which circumstances at first presented themselves; and also that it had been pursued with the utmost steadiness and firmness, and with eminent success: and, secondly that, even after fuller information was obtained of the state of the Peninsula, no other place could have been substituted which promised greater advantages." He entered into a detailed explanation of the object for which Sir



A. Wellesley had been sent to Portugal; and showed that the very circumstance of their so employing him before they had received the minute details of the posture of affairs in that country, for which Lord Grey would have had them wait, of itself justified their conduct in the other point of which he had complained of it, namely, in leaving large discretionary powers to the general. Indeed any general entrusted with the safety of an army in a distant country was entitled to have confidence reposed in him, and a large discretion left to him. And he reminded the House that the Gallician Junta had declared that the general's first object, even in the interest of Spain, should be the expulsion of the French from Portugal. Lord Grey had taken on himself to condemn Wellesley for fighting and defeating the French at Vimiero. "He could say with truth of that gallant officer, that he had been influenced by his public duty alone. And it would be superfluous now to repeat any eulogy on his campaign, which in thirteen days had compelled the enemy to evacuate Portugal. Lord Grey had also denounced the Ministry for having provided their general with an insufficient force of cavalry. He forgot not only the difficulty of procuring at a moment's notice any great quantity of transports for the conveyance of horses; but, what was still more material, he forgot also the nature of the country in which the army was to serve. In the centre of Spain cavalry could act, but not in the maritime provinces of either country. And so much was this the case that, when Sir John Moore was retreating, he was forced to separate the cavalry from the infantry because the best route for the infantry was one by which supplies for the cavalry could not be conveyed; and the march of the infantry was delayed owing to the necessity of bringing forward the cavalry in small detachments. Undoubtedly the Spaniards had met with reverses and misfortunes. Ministers had not been so weak, so destitute of foresight, as to expect that their first efforts would be

crowned with unequalled success. That would have been to calculate in impossibilities. But these reverses had not been owing to their interference in the cause or to their want of courage. They were rather to be imputed to their want of discipline and military experience and to an ill-judged contempt of the enemy." He was equally decided in his defence of Sir John Moore's operations: venturing even in the assertion that that officer's advance, "regarded as a diversion, had completely succeeded: and that he in his conscience believed that forward movement had saved Spain." He was probably alone in this opinion at the time, but, since he spoke, it has been corroborated by the soundest military critics, who have looked on the march into Castile as a proof of great strategical ability. Finally the speaker challenged the verdict of Parliament on the past campaign as a whole. "By it we had gained possession of the Russian fleet, while our own had been relieved from the tediousness and difficulties of a blockade. We had materially assisted the cause which we undertook to support. And, though Buonaparte had 200,000 men in that country; though his troops were of the bravest, his generals among the most skilful in the world, he had not yet succeeded in subduing Spain. It had been said a year before that Buonaparte was so placed that partial success would be almost as prejudicial to him as failure. But partial success was all that he had met with; for he had not yet got possession of more than half of Spain, and in the other districts the hostility of the people was as fierce as ever. Upon the whole, I have the satisfaction," concluded the speaker, "in common with my colleagues, to reflect that, whatever may be the results of the struggle we are embarked in, we have not lost the confidence of the Spanish people. We know that every Spanish heart beats high for their country; we know that, whatever shall happen, they will not accuse us. Submission may be the lot they are fated to endure in the end; but they do not impute to us the

cause of their misfortunes. They are sensible that neither the thirst after commerce, nor territory, nor security, has been the motive of the assistance we have offered them on this important occasion. Whatever may be the results, we have done our duty. We have not despaired; we have persevered, and will do so to the last, while there is anything left to contend for with the slightest prospect of eventual success."

It was an argumentative and manly defence, and it had its deserved recognition in a decisive majority. Lord Grey was aided by Lord Grenville, by Lord Sidmouth, and his steady adherent Lord Buckinghamshire, by all, in fact, who hoped to rise to office if the proposed address should be carried; but in an unusually full House he was beaten by above fifty votes, and the ministers were thus left at liberty to follow out their own designs for the deliverance of the Peninsula from the enemy's grasp. In April, as has been already stated, Wellesley sailed once more for that country, which he only quitted to cross the Pyrenees as the invader of France, after Victor, Massena, Ney, Marmont, Jourdain, and Soult had all proved alike unable to check his career of victory; and so completely had Lord Liverpool established his mastery over his opponents that when, later in the session, he brought down a message from the King to Parliament, desiring the Houses to enable him to furnish a loan to the Prince Regent of Portugal, the Whigs would not venture to do more than put up the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Buckinghamshire to utter a feeble murmur of discontent, and the money was granted with apparent unanimity.

A Cabinet has seldom had its firmness rewarded with such speedy and decisive success as attended the resolution of the present Ministry to prosecute its own plans of war without being turned aside by the clamours of faction. Even now a generation accustomed to look on the pre-eminence of Wellington as an indisputable fact can hardly avoid marvelling at the rapidity and completeness of his first triumphs. It was the 22d of April when, after a

stormy and dangerous voyage, he cast anchor in the Tagus. On the 1st of May he moved towards the northern provinces, on his way defeating one or two French generals in trifling actions. On the 13th he surprised Soult in Oporto, and drove him and his army from the city in ignominious retreat, which was also so sudden and unexpected that he himself ate the dinner which had been prepared for the French marshal. By the 18th he had chased him out of Portugal, as he would gladly have chased Junot the year before ; then, without a moment's delay returning to the south, he pushed on up the Tagus into Spain, with the view of relieving the northern provinces by alarming Soult for the safety of Madrid ; and before July had closed gained a decisive victory over King Joseph himself at Talavera.

With the conduct or progress of the war Lord Liverpool, however, had not yet any official connexion. It was fortunate for him that during the early part of the year he was still Home Secretary, as thus he escaped being mixed up in ever so trifling a degree with the annoyances which the charges brought against the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief must have caused the Secretary at War. And his chief troubles during that period arose from the conduct of the French princes and their retinues. The latter were continually quarrelling with one another, and sought to make him the umpire between them ; an office which he declined, not without administering a dignified rebuke to those who made so bad an use of the hospitality afforded them by this country, pursuing a line of conduct which was in the highest degree discreditable to the prince himself whom they acknowledged as their king ; while Louis himself was even more difficult to manage, since, discrowned as he was, he nevertheless looked on himself as King of all his fellow-emigrants in England, and put forth pretensions to exert an authority over them which was wholly incompatible with our laws and the rights of our own monarch.

As those who quarrelled took no care to conceal their differences, but rather seemed proud of publishing them to the world,<sup>1</sup> Lord Liverpool was compelled to expostulate with the princes themselves; and the following letter to the Comte d'Artois at last had the effect, if not of putting an end to the conduct of which he complained, of at least deterring the inferior parties from making their quarrels a public scandal, and of repressing the pretensions put forth by their head, which were inconsistent not only with our laws, but with the title of Count, which, as we have seen, was all that he claimed in this country.

*Private and most confidential.*

Charles Street, March 2, 1809.

SIR,

Since I had the honour of seeing your Royal Highness the day before yesterday, I am sorry to be under the necessity of stating that some circumstances have come to my knowledge respecting the intentions of the Comte de L'Isle, and of those who advise him, which have given me the most serious concern.

Your Royal Highness is fully acquainted with my sentiments with regard to the unjustifiable publications of Monsieur de Puisaye, and how sincerely I lamented the steps taken by the

<sup>1</sup> The following is a copy of a handbill which the Comte de Puisaye, not undistinguished in the wars of La Vendée, thought it decent to print and circulate about the noblemen at that time most in Louis's confidence: "Londres, Janvier 26, 1809. Mon respect pour le Roi de France, et pour les princes de son sang, ne me permettant pas de répliquer publiquement au libelle récemment répandu par M. Beyrade d'Avatay, avant d'avoir soumis à Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne les preuves qui constatent les méfaits et l'ignominie de l'homme qui a si longtems et si indignement abusé de sa confiance, j'espère que les honnêtes gens qui déplorent autant la forme audacieuse de ce libelle, qu'ils sont indignés de son contenu, me sauront gré d'un délai qu'ils jugeront sans doute être suffisamment justifié par son motif. Le COMTE JOSEPH DE PUISAYE, Lieutenant-Général." And the same Comte de Puisaye did more than this. For in some "Mémoires" which he published about this time he printed secret correspondence of some of our ministers, without any permission from our Government, and even, as Canning wrote to Lord Liverpool that he believed, "in defiance of Lord Castlereagh's prohibition." Our Government was forced at last to threaten to stop his pension.

Comte de L'Isle, and the Comte d'Avaray in consequence of them, not only as they were calculated to increase the very evils which they were intended to prevent, and to produce effects most prejudicial under the present circumstances to the cause of royalty itself, but as they had the appearance of an assertion, on the part of the Comte de L'Isle, of a species of jurisdiction over the French resident within his Majesty's dominions, which is wholly inconsistent with the laws and constitution of this country.

I will not conceal from your Royal Highness that the conduct of the Comte d'Avaray has appeared to his Majesty's Government to have been on several occasions so very objectionable, and his views with respect to this country so discordant from those which ought to be entertained by any person standing in the relation which he does to the Comte de L'Isle, that it has been a subject of deliberation how far it might not be proper to direct that he should leave this country. Painful and distressing as such a proceeding would be to his Majesty and his Government, the interests of the Comte de L'Isle himself might render it necessary to resort to it, unless the Comte d'Avaray can be induced to appreciate more correctly his real situation in this country.

I beg your Royal Highness will consider this letter as confidential ; at the same time I am sure I may rely on your prudence and good sense to prevent an explosion which, from your knowledge of this country, you must be sensible would be at any time most inconvenient, and at the present moment dangerous to the interests of those who occasioned it.

I have the honour, &c.,

LIVERPOOL.

The prodigious exertions which Napoleon was now making in Spain and Austria were in one point of view a relief to Lord Liverpool's department, since they prevented the possibility of any enterprise being undertaken by France against Ireland. And consequently, as he wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond, at the beginning of the summer, he was now able to consent to a portion of the force which had previously been required in that

country being transferred to Wellesley's command in Portugal. "He knew, however, that a considerable force must be wanted to secure internal tranquillity," and therefore Government "would never reduce the British infantry in Ireland below 120,000 men." He naturally attached great importance to the victory gained over Napoleon at Essling in May, hoping "for the most important consequences from it, if the Austrians could but follow up their successes, before he received reinforcements." But no British statesman could anticipate the miserable vacillations and jealousies which, combined with his own slowness of movements, hindered the Austrian prince's victory from being of any permanent advantage to his country. And scarcely the most experienced soldier could have calculated on the tenacity of purpose, the fertility of resource, the accuracy of combination, and energetic rapidity of execution by which, in the short space of six weeks, Napoleon was able to fight another battle on a still larger scale, and to terrify Austria into an ignominious peace which proved Wagram<sup>1</sup> to have been a decisive victory.

Our exertions, as it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, were not this year confined to the south of Europe. A still larger force than that entrusted to Wellesley was sent against Antwerp. It miscarried to a great extent,

<sup>1</sup> In spite of the pompous bulletin of Napoleon, no testimony can be plainer than that of Savary, who was in the battle, that Wagram was not a victory till the Archduke Charles made it one by his unaccountable retreat. He says, "*L'armée autrichienne nous tint tête presque partout.*" And, after pointing out one or two errors in the Archduke's conduct, he adds, "*l'armée autrichienne n'avait aucune raison pour se retirer, elle était plus forte que nous ;*" and concludes, "*Les grands évènements de guerre sont toujours suivis d'un état moral qui forme l'opinion pour ou contre un des deux partis. La bataille d'Essling nous avait rendu l'opinion défavorable. Celle de Wagram détruisit ce que la première avait produit de fâcheux, et nous rendit un peu de notre première popularité. Ce qui acheva de nous ramener l'opinion, qui s'entêtait à douter de notre succès, c'est que nous suivîmes l'armée autrichienne dans sa retraite.* (Mém. du Duc de Rovigo, iv. 13.)



chiefly through an undue deference to the judgment of George III. himself, who probably, from an attachment to Pitt's memory, pressed the appointment of that statesman's brother, Lord Chatham, to the command of the army employed. Yet the enterprise was not ill-judged, nor did it wholly fail, since the destruction of Flushing, which was fully accomplished, was an achievement of great importance in the eyes of our ablest soldiers, and of Napoleon also, whose works at Antwerp were deprived of their chief value by the demolition of the docks and arsenal at the mouth of the Scheldt. We need not enter into the details of the expedition ; but, as the consideration which led to its being generally regarded as neither fortunate nor creditable to the country proceeded mainly from the pestilence which the unwholesome air of the Walcheren marshes engendered among our troops, a very conclusive defence of the endeavour to retain possession of that island, which was submitted to his colleagues by Lord Liverpool, who, before we had evacuated it, had become Secretary of the War Department, will be read with interest, and can hardly be denied to have been well founded.

In the following observations I confine myself to that part of the question respecting the expedition to the Scheldt which relates to the retention of the island of Walcheren, after the object of Antwerp had been entirely abandoned, and the army withdrawn from South Reveland.

The possession of the island of Walcheren, and the town and port of Flushing, have been at all times favourite objects of policy with the Government of this country. The latter, together with Rammikens and the Bril, have been actually in our possession, and been garrisoned by British troops from the year 1585 to the year 1616, and the restoration of these places to the States of Holland was one of the most unpopular acts of King James I.

The conquest of Walcheren has been a subject repeatedly under the consideration of different Administrations during the last war and the present. It was a subject of consideration in

Lord Sidmouth's Administration. It was an object about which Mr. Pitt was particularly anxious in the year 1805. It is likewise reported to have been an object of the last Administration in the year 1806-7, as the best diversion that could then be made in favour of Russia. On these several occasions, I speak confidently of the two first, the object was abandoned, not from undervaluing its importance, nor from the supposed unhealthiness of the climate, but because the military means at the time were thought inadequate to the attainment of it.

I can appeal likewise to Lord St. Vincent, to Commander Owen, and to every naval officer who has seriously reflected on the subject of invasion, whether the Scheldt is not the only quarter from whence an invasion of England can be seriously apprehended, as long as we maintain our superiority at sea; and whether the possession of the island of Walcheren would not render any such project impracticable, by making it impossible for any fleet or flotilla of the enemy to move out of the Scheldt without the certainty of our being able to bring them to action. These particulars having been premised, it is further to be observed that one of the objects of the expedition to the Scheldt was a diversion in favour of Austria. It is not denied that Austria would have preferred a more early diversion to the north of Germany, but, after the expedition to the Scheldt had been undertaken, the Austrian Government were so persuaded of the importance of it as a diversion in their favour that they were particularly solicitous that the operation should be continued in that quarter, and should not then be diverted elsewhere. During a considerable part of the month of August, during the whole of the month of September, and until the middle of the month of October, there was every reason to believe that hostilities were to be renewed. As late as the 10th of October a letter was received from Mr. Bathurst, dated the 21st of September, informing the Government that the armistice was to be renounced the next day. The accounts of the state of the Austrian army were most favorable, and the change which had taken place in the command was represented as likely to lead to more vigorous operations. It was not till about the middle of October that reports were first brought to this country which proved afterwards to be unfounded, Articles

of Peace having been actually signed between Austria and France.<sup>1</sup> It was not till the 30th of October that the fact of peace having been signed was known with certainty in this country, and measures had been taken to prevent any delay which might occur in the evacuation of Walcheren on the 24th and 27th of that month.

The expedition to the Scheldt had produced the effect of diverting troops from the interior of Germany, and which were on their march towards the Danube to Antwerp and Holland. The occupation of Walcheren by British troops, and the spirit of discontent which had manifested itself in some parts of Holland and the Low Countries, and was likely to be kept alive by the retention of the island by the British Government, rendered it impossible for Buonaparte, in such a state of things, not to keep a considerable force in those countries. But whether that force was more or less, the question is whether the Government of this country would ever have been pardoned if, upon the renewal of hostilities, any proportion of French force could have been directed towards the Danube, which must have otherwise been employed in keeping in check the British force, and those who might be supposed likely to support them, and thereby decide the fate of the campaign, which, from the experience of what had occurred previous to the armistice and the unsubdued spirit of the Austrian armies, might not otherwise unreasonably be considered as doubtful. But, even if hostilities did not recommence, was not the possession of so favourite an object as Walcheren and Flushing by the British force likely to have an effect favorable to Austria in the negotiation for peace? It was certainly believed in Paris that the conquest and retention of the island by the British forces had materially influenced the negotiation. Upon this view of the question alone, there would be little difficulty in contending that, even if the expedition should not be judged by some the most expedient direction of the British force, yet having been undertaken, and the island of Walcheren being in our possession at a time when it was uncertain whether hosti-

<sup>1</sup> The battle of Wagram was fought July 6th, 1809. On the 18th Austria signed an armistice, and the Peace of Vienna was formally signed October 14th.

lities would or would not be renewed between Austria and France, it could not be judged politic to abandon it till the issue of those negotiations was known, particularly as the winter season was approaching, and the inconvenience of retaining Walcheren was likely to diminish every day.

It must be observed, in the next place, that, independent of the general value attached to Walcheren as a naval station, Sir Richard Strachan wrote to Lord Mulgrave on the 13th of September, to request that the island might not be given up till he had had an opportunity of seeing Lord Mulgrave upon the subject, and until Government had heard all the opinions for and against it. He states his own opinion to be strongly, under the then existing circumstances, for retaining the island. Sir Richard Strachan did not arrive in the Downs until the 3d of October.

In all the communications which his Majesty's ministers had at the time with the different officers who came from Walcheren, or who had had an opportunity of forming an opinion upon the practicability of retaining it, the distinction which was taken was whether the state of the Continent admitted of the French Government directing a considerable portion of their force against that island. They were all of opinion that, if the war between Austria and France should recommence, there could be no doubt but that it was possible to retain it with a comparatively small force, both naval and military; but that if peace should be re-established between Austria and France, and a large proportion of the disposable force of France could be brought into Flanders and Holland, the defence of Walcheren would evidently be attended with very great difficulty, and at all events could only be accomplished by a very large force, both naval and military, and at a very considerable expense. Under such circumstances the policy of retaining it must have depended in a considerable degree on the question of peace or war between Austria and France.

But even if it had been determined to evacuate the island as early as the 9th or 10th of September, the evacuation could not have been accomplished, together with the destruction of the basin, in less than six weeks, or I might even say two months.

For the sick must all have been embarked before the effective

part of the garrison could be removed, and before it would have been safe to have given the alarm in the island, which the commencement of the operations for destroying the basins would necessarily create. The number of sick were nearly 8,000 on the 13th of September, and above 9,000 (the largest number at any period) on the 23d of September. The evacuation could not therefore, in this view, have been effected before the end of the month of October, the period at which the healthy season is represented as usually beginning. It must likewise be observed that the effect of destroying the basin, and the practicability of stopping up the navigation of the river, could only be ascertained by local observations on the spot, after we had obtained possession of the island, and, until the sentiments of the naval officers and engineers were ascertained upon these points, it would not have been adviseable to have determined on the evacuation. It was found impracticable to stop up the navigation, but the destruction of the basin for a time was effectually accomplished; and it appears by the last accounts that the French Government are not determined even to attempt to restore it: until they can restore it, or establish some port equally convenient in the same quarter, they lose the advantage of being able to keep twenty sail of the line in a state ready equipped for sea at the mouth of the Scheldt.

The autumn of the year 1809 once more brought the office of Prime Minister within Lord Liverpool's reach, if the gratification of personal ambition had ever been a prime object of his policy. The circumstances that led to the change which took place, though from their coincidence in point of time with the expedition to Flanders they were often identified in the view of the public with that enterprise, were in point of fact wholly independent of it. They must be attributed, in the first instance, to that restlessness of disposition which has already been remarked as the chief fault of Canning's character, leading him to be always dissatisfied with the way in which every department but his own was managed. A natural consciousness of splendid ability had also engendered in him something of a dicta-

torial temper, which had been greatly fostered by occurrences in his personal history since Pitt's death, which showed him the high value which all persons attached to his co-operation. Even while Fox still held the seals Lord Grenville had made a second attempt to gain him to his Administration almost on his own terms. He was nearly connected by marriage with the Duke of Portland;<sup>1</sup> and, on the formation of the present Cabinet, he had had influence sufficient to close it against Lord Sidmouth; and this circumstance probably contributed to create a belief in his mind that his dictation on other points would not be resisted. Under the influence of this unfortunate disposition, in the course of the spring he began to suggest alterations in the composition of the Cabinet to the Prime Minister. There had been differences of opinion between Canning and Lord Castlereagh in the preceding winter, principally on the obligation of the Government to carry out the terms agreed to by the generals concerned in the Convention of Cintra; and in the discussion of the point raised by Canning, who insisted that they had exceeded their powers, the Cabinet in general had coincided with Lord Castlereagh. Canning had subsequently expressed great discontent at the comparative failure of Sir John Moore's expedition, and began to feel still more annoyance than, as the arrangement was inevitable, he could well express, at a clashing of the War Department, over which Lord Castlereagh presided, with his own Foreign Office in portions of their political correspondence.<sup>2</sup> A coolness had in consequence grown up between the two ministers; and Canning, availing himself of his connexion with the Prime Minister, at the beginning of April urged the removal of Lord Castlereagh, and his replacement by Lord Wellesley, with whom, ever since that nobleman's return from India, he had closely connected himself. The Duke

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Portland and Canning had married two sisters.

<sup>2</sup> See "George Canning and his Times" (by G. A. Stapleton, Mr. Canning's private Secretary), p. 174.

received and acted on the demand thus made upon him with an imbecile unfairness which nothing but his bodily sufferings can excuse : he apparently did not at all coincide in the sufficiency of Canning's reasons for removing a colleague with whom he generally agreed ; but he saw still less how to dispense with Canning's assistance, if he should persist in offering his own resignation as the only alternative ; and he therefore agreed to require Lord Castlereagh's retirement in favour of Lord Wellesley after a time, though in the meanwhile he kept the contemplated arrangement a profound secret from all but one or two of his colleagues, one of whom, Lord Camden, the President of the Council, was looked upon as the especial friend of Lord Castlereagh. The general outline of the events which ensued cannot be better explained than in a letter from Lord Liverpool to Mr. Wallace, written while the new arrangements were in progress which they had necessitated :

*Private and confidential.*

Coombe Wood, September 23, 1809.

MY DEAR WALLACE,

As you must be desirous of knowing generally the circumstances which have led to the present extraordinary state of the King's Government, I have thought the following account of them would not be unacceptable to you. The particulars must be deferred till you come to town.

The story respecting Lord Castlereagh is too long to render it possible for me to trouble you with it at length at the present moment. His removal from the situation of the Secretary of State had been determined some time before either Perceval, myself, or the majority of the King's servants knew of the occurrences which had led to it. The expedition to the Scheldt had been decided before we even heard of it ; and the question at that time was, whether the communication should be made to Lord Castlereagh immediately after the sailing of the expedition, or whether it should be deferred till its conclusion, and till the result of it was known in this country. A variety of considerations induced us to think (perhaps erroneously) that this was the most improper time for making any new



arrangements of the departments of Government ; and we were led to hope that some events might occur in the course of the expedition which might obviate, in some degree, the difficulties which at that time presented themselves to our minds.

In this state matters remained till Sunday, the 10th inst., when the expedition being considered by Canning to be at an end, he called upon the Duke of Portland for the fulfilment of the promise which the duke had most unfairly extracted from the King (without the knowledge of the greater part of his colleagues, and particularly of those whom he was most bound to consult), at the time Lord Granville Leveson was admitted into the cabinet. The promise was, however, absolute, and, having been made in the King's name, must necessarily be fulfilled.

The state of the Duke of Portland's health had become more critical every day ; and it occurred to me that the best means of obviating the various difficulties with which we were surrounded, was by persuading the Duke of Portland to retire, and by making, in consequence, an entire new arrangement of the Administration.

It was obvious that no satisfactory arrangement could be made of the Government in the House of Commons if Perceval and Canning did not both form a part of it. Though there might be advantages in the first minister being in the House of Commons, Perceval was fully aware that Canning might make difficulties in acting under him in that capacity, and in a communication which passed between them he proposed that they should both keep their relative situations, and that some peer, whom the King would approve, should be agreed upon as First Lord of the Treasury. This communication led to an explanation from Canning that, in his opinion, the first minister must be in the House of Commons ; that the choice in that House rested between Perceval and himself ; that he could not expect that Perceval would agree to his holding the situation, and that he, on the other hand, could not agree to act under Perceval as first minister. To this Perceval replied that their situations were very different. That since the commencement of the present Government he had been entrusted with the general direction of business in the House of Commons ; that he could not consent to Canning being minister without giving

up both the situation and office which he had hitherto held in the House of Commons ; that in the other alternative Canning would remain in the same office, and that though his (Perceval's) power and authority in the House would be somewhat increased, Canning's would not, therefore, be diminished ; that he was aware, however, of the difficulties which might be considered as fairly standing in the way of such an arrangement, and that it was his wish, therefore, that they should endeavour to agree upon a third person to whom these objections did not apply. This proposal was, however, rejected. Canning declared that, if the Duke of Portland resigned, he should resign likewise ; that he was ready to undertake to be minister himself, but that he could not agree to any arrangements of the nature suggested.

Such is the state of this most extraordinary transaction.

I have stated little more than facts, and leave them to your own judgment. I should only add that the remaining members of the Cabinet, with the exception of Lord Granville Leveson, are determined to stand together, and by the King. Huskisson and Sturges Bourne follow Canning ; Rose, Long, Wellesley Pole, and I believe I may say all the other members of the Government, appear disposed to take their part with the majority of the Cabinet. It would be vain, however, to think of forming a Government on our own exclusive strength without some attempt at union with the most respectable of those who have hitherto been opposed to us. In consequence of this opinion Perceval and myself received the King's commands, on Saturday, to communicate with Lord Grey and Lord Grenville for the purpose of forming an extended and combined Administration. Messengers have been sent with this communication, and I conclude Lord Grey and Lord Grenville will be in town by the end of the week. What will be the result of the negotiation it is impossible to say ; but under all the present circumstances it is certainly deserving of a fair trial.

I shall be obliged to you if you will consider this letter as confidential. You shall hear from me again as soon as the result is known.

Believe me to be,

Most sincerely yours,

LIVERPOOL

In the course of the summer, as is mentioned in this letter, Canning had been strengthened in the Cabinet by the introduction of his friend Lord Granville Leveson, who in June succeeded Sir James Pulteney as Secretary at War, an office which did not usually confer a seat in that body; but this did not render him less anxious for the other alteration. And, as soon as the failure of the Walcheren expedition was known, though this was in no degree attributable to Lord Castlereagh, whose measures of provision for its success had been complete and admirable, he demanded the instant fulfilment of the arrangement which had been promised to him. His renewal of his application had two consequences which he did not anticipate. The duke, terrified at the degree of trouble and arrogance which he foresaw, instantly resigned; and Lord Castlereagh then for the first time becoming aware of what had been going on behind his back so long, naturally conceived that he had been treated with the most extreme unfairness. He certainly had; but the persons to blame were the duke himself and Lord Camden, not Canning, who had not been aware of the secrecy which had been practised, and who, as soon as he became acquainted with it, foresaw that the blame of it would fall on himself, and remonstrated warmly against it.<sup>1</sup> Lord Castlereagh took the view which Canning

<sup>1</sup> I subjoin an extract from a letter from Canning to the Duke, a copy of which is in the Liverpool Papers. The date is July 18. "But in justice to myself I cannot forbear to request of your Grace that it may be remembered, whenever hereafter this concealment shall be alleged (as I doubt not it will) *against me*, as an act of injustice towards Lord Castlereagh, that it did not originate in my suggestion; that, so far from desiring it, I conceived, however erroneously, Lord Camden to be the sure channel of communication to Lord Castlereagh; and that, to a very late period, I believed such communication to have been actually made." And the Duke replied: "As to the reserve which you observe has been practised, and is to be continued, towards Lord Castlereagh, I have not the least hesitation in assuring you that I shall always be ready to avow its having originated with me; and, whatever blame may have been or to be incurred, to take the whole of it, and to acknowledge the remonstrances you have repeatedly made against it."

foresaw that he would take, and claimed satisfaction in the way in which in those days it was ordinarily given. The two ministers fought a duel, and, almost as a matter of course, subsequently resigned their offices.

The first steps in the reconstruction of the Ministry have been indicated in the letter to Mr. Wallace. It was not without the greatest unwillingness that the King was induced to consent that Lord Grenville and Lord Grey should be consulted; and his surrender of his own inclinations and judgment met but a sorry reward.<sup>1</sup> Lord Grey refused to go to London to discuss any future arrangements, and Lord Grenville went to town with a fixed resolution to reject whatever proposal might be made to him; consequently the Ministry went on as before, with a slight rearrangement of offices, and undoubtedly with some diminution of strength: not indeed in the House of Lords, where they gained weight by the acquisition of Lord Wellesley as a colleague, but in the Commons, where the loss of both Canning and Lord Castlereagh was of incalculable importance; certainly not to be counterbalanced by the acquisition of Mr. Ryder, who became a Secretary of State. Before his duel Canning had avowedly been a candidate for the Treasury, saying openly that it was desirable, as

But I must own to you that I neither knew, nor did I imagine, that till a late period, or, indeed, at any time since the measure of Lord C——'s removal has been in agitation, you have believed that the communication of it had been actually made to him."

<sup>1</sup> I subjoin a curious and interesting letter from Mr. Perceval to Lord Liverpool, giving an account of his conversation with the King on this subject:

"MY DEAR LORD,

"As you desired me to give you a line upon my return from Windsor, I sit down for that purpose. But, in the first place, I must state that I did not arrive here till past four o'clock, and found the summons to the Cabinet at half-past three, which, as I could not possibly attend till past five, I am obliged to neglect. As the King kept me for a full hour and a half, and as his conversation was very precise, abstruse, and continued, it is impossible to attempt giving you any full idea of it. Many points, indeed, I shall hardly notice. What he said of Lord Chatham, who he says is hurt, and adds, '*With reason,*'

indeed it has often been felt and acknowledged to be since, that the Prime Minister should be a member of the Lower

and what I observed upon that, will keep : but he began with it. Upon quitting that subject he said, '*But now to our business.*' And then he told me he must give me an account of Canning's conversation, which he called the most extraordinary he ever heard. He went through it with wonderful accuracy. I will endeavour, at another time, to give you the particulars ; all that is now important is that, in the King's opinion, and in mine also from his relation of it, it was very little different from his letter, except that it was more explicit and more strong, and except that he distinctly stated to the King, as his opinion, that the D—— of P——'s health was such that it was not possible he should retain his situation. The points in which he was more precise were, that the minister who must in these times be necessarily in the House of Commons must also necessarily have complete authority over all other departments. That at the present time he and I were the only persons that could be this minister, not only in the present Administration, but in any part of the House. That he should not be surprised or displeased in the least if the King preferred me ; that it would be the most natural thing of the two, it would hardly require a new patent, only the insertion of a new name in the old one. But that if his Majesty honoured him with his commands, he would readily undertake it. 'Not,' said the King, 'that he would consider of it, that he would advise with others, as you or any other person would have said, but he was fully prepared to undertake it. Now,' continued his Majesty, 'I do not believe, if he was to be the minister, that there is any one of you who would continue with him ; and he does not seem at all to think of that.' I told him I had no authority to say, or means of knowing, that none of his present servants would continue : I thought some certainly would not, but I could not pretend to speak for any one but myself. I told him that when I had penned the passage in the minute, in which it was said that his Majesty might collect from Mr. C——'s letter that he would undertake it, I had been almost afraid I might have drawn an inference beyond what might have been intended. 'Oh, no,' he said, 'he stated it to me most distinctly, and said that the ministers who retired when Mr. Pitt died had done in his opinion very unwisely, that he was not then in the Cabinet, but that he should have advised otherwise.' I said I had never heard before that he had thought so, but I could not pretend to say what his opinion was at that time ; but if he had not said that he would have advised their continuance, I should rather have suspected the contrary to be his opinion. These are, I think, the most material points in the King's narrative of Canning's conversation, the comment and observations upon which I have no time for now, nor for many other particulars which I could state but

House ; and avowing also that, though he could not expect Perceval to serve under him, he on his part would not serve

or want of time. The account of this narrative and the observations upon it being over, he then proceeded to the subject of the minute of the Cabinet. He said he would consider of it very maturely, could not deliver an opinion then. I assured him I had not expected one ; I only thought he might wish to see me, and converse upon various points of it. He was very glad I had come, he said, and glad to talk to me about it ; that he should talk to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Liverpool and others to-morrow. He knew, indeed, that they could not represent it in any other view than had been done in the paper ; but it was a decision for life, everything was at stake, and he must not come to that decision without the maturest consideration, that he did not know how to make up his mind to it. He seemed disappointed at the opinion leading to a communication both with Lord Grey and Lord Grenville ; the latter evidently formed, as we anticipated, the great objection. He could do nothing towards it, he said, till he was satisfied upon the point (the Catholic question). When he was advised last to send for Mr. Pitt by the Lord Chancellor, he had required to know expressly from Mr. Pitt that he would not bring forward that question ; that he had the most direct assurance from Mr. Pitt in writing ; he knew he had his letter, he had been looking for it (he then digressed into an account of his papers ; that he was arranging them all regularly ; that up to 1800 they were quite perfect ; and from the commencement of the late Administration up to August last ; and that for that period he could turn to any paper in a minute) ; but he said he should find Mr. Pitt's paper ; it was an express assurance. And further, he said, when he saw Mr. Pitt, he not only confirmed the assurance, but added, that he would not only not bring it forward, but that for private views of his own he would oppose it whoever brought it forward. This, he said, he voluntarily said to him : it was more than he expected ; it surprised him ; it appeared like an expression of his own opinion ; that he might have paid him (the King) the compliment of supposing that the determination was taken out of compliment to him ; but he stated it to be for private reasons of his own. He must, he said, have a similar assurance now ; that this was a point he could not give up in honour : no more, he said, could I ; that I as well as he had both given our opinions upon that point solemnly to the country ; that we could not give them up.

“ I agreed that we could not give them up ; that his servants were unanimous in their opinion that he must be protected against that question ; that it was with that view, and upon that principle, that they had humbly given his Majesty the opinion which that paper contained ; that they thought under the circumstances of the times that it



under Perceval. It was an avowal which could not be justified, so manifestly did it involve an arrogant boast of

was the most effectual, if not the only effectual, means of so protecting him. That if Lord Grey and Lord Grenville consented to form a Government with us, who were known to have such decided opinions upon that subject, they must come into that Government with a perfect knowledge that that measure could never be a measure of that Government; that this would necessarily be implied from the very formation of the Government. 'It must be expressed,' he said, 'or he could not be satisfied.' I stated that it did not appear to me probable to expect that Lords Grey and Grenville could as men of honour consent, after all that had been said upon this subject, to have even the question put to them, to require an express declaration upon this. 'Then,' said he, 'I am driven to the wall, and would be deserted.' I assured his Majesty again that the object of his present servants was to protect him; they would not desert him; that the opinion we had furnished to his Majesty was, as we thought, the best mode of protecting him; that if we made an ineffectual attempt to form an Administration alone, we should be overpowered, and would not be able to stand between him and the wall.

"Then," said he, rather hastily, but very collectedly and firmly, 'they should take the Government to themselves, he would have nothing to do with it, they should not have his name.' 'Oh, sir,' said I, 'what an extremity your Majesty is contemplating! What would become of your Majesty's country?' 'No country had a right to expect a man should give up his own honour. His honour was in his own keeping. If the country deserted him, he could not help it.' I again assured his Majesty that deserting him was the last thing we thought of. But we conceived that the combined Government which we had an idea of forming was to be formed by his Majesty's present servants, and with such a proportion of them that, having a full share in the different offices, we should, by refusing at any time (as we should refuse) to concur in any measure of that description, be enabled to put a stop to it by bringing the Government to an end; that they would feel this, and they therefore would naturally not think of attempting it. He then asked what reason we had for thinking they would form such a Government. I said that we could not, without almost making an overture to them, have found their real sentiments; but that we had reason, from various conversations of their friends, to think it probable they would not generally object, though undoubtedly we could not tell in what manner they would expect it to be made. He asked what these conversations were. I told him Lord Henry Petty's to Lord Euston, Lord Grey's to Colonel Gordon, Lord G. Cavendish's to Lord W. Bentinck. 'But then,' he said, 'what is to be done if they refuse?' I

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a superiority of talent. For Perceval was the older man and the older minister; he had filled the office which

said we had not omitted to think of that: but that the manner of their refusing, and the grounds on which they refused, might be so various, and it would depend so much upon them, that there was no possibility beforehand of distinctly saying what would in that event be best to be done till the event occurred. Then he asked how it was to be done. I suggested the letter to both at once, stating his Majesty's commands that they should communicate with us, and that we should consider on the formation of a Government, and that we had his commands also to acquaint them that if they wished to see his Majesty first that his Majesty would see them. That would be very hard upon him, he said; he had no means of letting the world know what might pass: they might each tell their own story. The last time he had the good fortune to have it in writing. That would not do; he could not see them; but he knew from us what they were prepared to do. That he was the worst person in the whole world to settle any point with them; he was sure he should quarrel with them at the first setting out. I said that certainly would not answer any purpose; that it was certainly an important consideration that his Majesty might think of, but that we had considered that it would be better to offer them the alternative. Then he asked whether I thought I alone should communicate with them, or I and any one else. I said that as there were to be two of them, I thought it preferable that there should be some one joined with me. He agreed in this, and suggested the Chancellor as the person. I explained the Chancellor's objection, from the various instances of personal conflict in which he had been engaged with them. 'What,' says he, impatiently, 'do you think I could be advised to form a Government without the Chancellor?' 'By no means,' I said; I thought that the present Chancellor might be one of the Government; but that your Lordship must be another: that I considered this as indispensable. He then seemed to be satisfied as to the reason for not joining the Chancellor with me, and canvassed the question whether it should be you, or Lord Bathurst, or who else; and this, as well as other questions, were left open for consideration. Much more passed, which I may possibly in part recollect, though I am not certain that I shall; but I think I have given you enough to show the temper of mind in which I found him, and that at last his mind was led to consider the proposition with more reference to the detail of it than he would have done if he had insurmountable objections to the whole. He concluded however with saying he could not yet form any opinion; that he must take time to think of it. He thanked me for coming down to him, and for giving him, as he expressed it, that opportunity of *thinking aloud* upon it.

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latterly the Prime Minister when a commoner had usually united with the Treasury, and he had been the leader of the Ministry in the House of Commons. And it is a striking proof of the extent to which the ascendancy of Canning's genius was acknowledged, that his thus claiming promotion over Perceval's head, as a condition of his continuing to serve his Majesty as a member of the Government, does not appear to have struck those who were aware of such a pretension as unreasonable.

The duel, however, as he felt himself, put an end for the time to such a possibility. The King himself was justly offended with both the combatants. In acknowledging the letter in which Lord Liverpool conveyed to him the intelligence of what had taken place, he declared it "had occasioned him not more serious concern than surprise, that two persons holding the situations of Secretaries of State, and still in possession of the seals of office, should have been guilty of so total a dereliction of duty as to violate the laws which they were bound to maintain by the authority vested in them." If, therefore, the Prime Minister was to be a commoner, Perceval had now no competitor. Lord Liverpool coincided in the opinion that that arrangement was the most desirable. The King willingly adopted this view, and once more united the Treasury and the Exchequer.

But the events which were taking place at the same time in Germany were again leaving us to maintain the whole burden of the war against France. On the 14th of October

"Upon the whole I never knew him in any conversation which I have had the honour of having with him so coherent, so distinct, or anything like so methodical in the view which he took of the different points of the subjects on which he conversed. I much doubt whether you will think my account gives you a fair representation of it in these particulars, but I have been writing as fast as my pen could run, and I fear you will have some trouble in deciphering it. You may read it to any of your colleagues you please, and I will thank you to send it to the Chancellor for his information before he sees the King to-morrow.

"Yours very truly,

"SP. PERCEVAL."

Austria signed a final treaty of peace at Vienna, so that we had no longer a single ally but Portugal, whose exertions could be of no service unless they were both supported by English liberality and directed by English skill. In such a posture of affairs the department which was charged with the conduct of hostilities became, next to the Exchequer, the most important office in the State ; and therefore Perceval's first step in the organization of the Cabinet was to propose to Lord Liverpool to quit the Home Office and become Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. Though he had originally been unwilling to take the Home Office in exchange for that of Foreign Affairs, Lord Liverpool had now become so familiar with its duties that he would have preferred continuing where he was ; but he saw, as he explained in a letter to the King on the subject, that his agreeing to the arrangement proposed " would afford greater facilities than any other plan for completing the Government in a way which would be acceptable to his Majesty ; and he never allowed his personal inclinations or convenience to interfere with the requirements of the public service. His general feeling on the duty of all the ministers to sacrifice every other consideration to that of serving the King with a due consideration for his feelings and unalterable opinions, is shown in the following extract of a letter from him to Lord Wellington on his first acceptance of his new office :—

I know you have heard from Pole,<sup>1</sup> and probably from others, all the distressing circumstances which have led to Castlereagh's and Canning's resignation, and to the present state of the Administration. It is painful to reflect that a Government, which had nothing serious to apprehend from its enemies, should be brought to the point of dissolution by the divisions of its friends. Whatever may be the state of personal feelings on some parts of these transactions, or the public difficulties in which they may have involved us, the line of duty I consider

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. W. Wellesley Pole, Lord Wellington's brother, afterwards Lord Maryborough.

as plain. We accepted the Government two years ago to protect the King against an unwarranted attempt to surprise his conscience on a subject on which he was known to have the strongest scruples. Having done so, I feel that we are bound not to desert him. We may be defeated in the struggle when Parliament meets; but, even in that event, we shall at least have the satisfaction of keeping a respectable party together, which may be able to afford some protection to the King, and, I trust, some security to the country.

One more change also requires notice. As on Canning's resignation his friend Lord Granville Leveson had also retired, Lord Palmerston was now transferred to the post of Secretary at War, which he held from that time without interruption for nearly twenty years, still discharging its duties when, on Lord Liverpool's illness in 1827, Canning, then becoming Prime Minister, rewarded his long service by attaching to it a seat in the Cabinet.

Though, as we have seen, Lord Liverpool had a strong impression of the value of the island of Walcheren, if it were possible to retain it, the practicability of doing so appeared both to him and his colleagues so greatly affected by the conclusion of the Treaty of Vienna, which must enable Napoleon to bring down an overpowering force on the Scheldt, that he now recommended the withdrawal of our troops, founding this advice, in a minute which he submitted on the subject to the King, entirely on the withdrawal of Austria from the war, and in no respect on any change of his own opinion as to the importance of the island. The King approved of the intention, adding an expression of great anxiety for the destruction of all the naval works along the banks of the Scheldt, which had formed a part of Lord Liverpool's proposal. Accordingly orders were at once sent out; the whole of the fortifications, the docks and arsenal, all which had recently been greatly enlarged and strengthened, were demolished, and before Christmas the last regiment had returned home; many of the men unhappily bringing back with them the seeds of disease, which the pestilential

vapours of the Walcheren marshes seemed to have implanted permanently in their constitutions.

At the same time Lord Liverpool was taking a deep personal interest in another matter which was of a mixed character, private as well as in some degree political. The arrangements for the reconstruction of the Ministry had not been fully completed when the Duke of Portland died. He had been Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and, even before his death, Lord Grenville had been diligently canvassing the members of the University in the hope of succeeding him. He had so decidedly deserted the Tories for the Whigs that it was not to be expected that he would be allowed to obtain his object without opposition ; but the Tories were long irresolute whom to select as their candidate. Those most solicitous for the honour of the University naturally desired to put forth some one whose general reputation for ability and statesmanship should be at least as high as that of Lord Grenville, even with the additional weight that his name derived from the fact of his having been Prime Minister. And with this feeling some of the heads of colleges applied to Lord Liverpool to allow himself to be put in nomination. It was known, however, that the Duke of Beaufort, who had extensive connexions with the University, was anxious for the honour, and, as Lord Liverpool's friends admitted their belief that he also would certainly become a candidate, Lord Liverpool declined the proposal, feeling a great solicitude that Lord Grenville should be defeated, and being equally convinced that a division of the Tory interest must render his success probable. The Tories then turned their eyes to the Lord Chancellor ; and, as by that time a report had got abroad that the Duke of Beaufort had abandoned all idea of offering himself, Lord Eldon consented to stand in the breach. He had hardly committed himself to the competition when it became known that the duke would certainly be nominated also. And thus the evil which Lord Liverpool had sacrificed his

own pretensions to avert was incurred. He laboured, however, as strenuously in the interest of his colleague as he could have done in his own cause ; canvassing all whom he could have any hope of influencing for his brother minister ; and putting Lord Eldon's claims still more on the ground of his opposition to the emancipation of the Roman Catholics than on the pre-eminent reputation which he was rapidly creating as a judge. But his efforts were in vain. The division of the Tory interest was fatal to both candidates. The Duke of Beaufort had no chance himself, but he drew from the Chancellor votes enough to turn the scale against him, and at the close of the poll, though the two Tories had between them above 700 votes, Lord Grenville defeated Lord Eldon by 13, having 406 in his favour against 393.

As may be supposed, the moment that the question of Walcheren was disposed of the attention of the new War Secretary was engrossed by the war in the Peninsula. Wellesley, for his capture of Oporto and victory at Talavera, had been raised to the peerage as Viscount Wellington, and Lord Liverpool now bent the whole of his energies to furnishing him with means to win still higher honours. It was probably a consideration of the advantages which might be expected to arise from having in the Government a brother of the general employed in the Peninsula, that had led him and his colleagues so willingly to accede to Canning's proposal to substitute Lord Wellesley for Lord Castlereagh. And now, the moment that he himself had changed his office, he wrote to the marquis, who was at this time at Lisbon as our ambassador, to "convey to him in the strongest terms his *personal* anxiety that he should accept the offer which would be made him," of returning home to take the Foreign Office, "and joining the greater part of his old friends in supporting the King's authority against the endeavours which would infallibly be made to reduce him to a state of unconditional submission." For it was less

a secret than ever that the Opposition, headed by Lord Grenville, designed to make a vigorous effort at the meeting of Parliament to force themselves into office ; miscalculating so greatly the disinterestedness and high-mindedness of Canning as to believe that they might gain him as a coadjutor. Lord Liverpool himself did not think it absolutely impossible that he might be won over by a repetition of the offers which Lord Grenville had formerly made to him ; but, though he knew how intimately Lord Wellesley had connected himself with him, he had no scruple in expressing his confidence that, even if Canning, from a feeling of disappointment at recent events, should so commit himself, Lord Wellesley would not suffer his friend "to involve him also in that connexion. He was," he concluded, "most solicitous to add that, if a consideration of all the circumstances of the case should induce Lord Wellesley to accept the offer, he would find in himself a colleague who would be desirous most cordially to co-operate with him in every branch of business, whether in office or in Parliament. It was a satisfaction to reflect that, amidst all the difficulties of the Ministry, they were at this time an united party, and that they had a cause to support which the country had not hitherto, when a fair appeal had been made to it, shown any disposition to abandon."

On the question thus alluded to, the removal of the restrictions on the Roman Catholics, Lord Wellesley did not wholly agree with his correspondent. He was not, indeed, inclined to press for emancipation in the teeth of insurmountable obstacles ; but he judged, with statesmanlike foresight, that it must eventually be conceded, and that therefore it was only a question of time. But, though thus differing from Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool on the cardinal point of their domestic policy, he had no hesitation in joining them as a colleague, because at the time the foreign policy of the country was the more important, or at least the more immediately pressing



consideration. That, in his eyes, was identified with the support to be given to his brother in his campaign; and he had no doubt that he could aid Wellington more efficiently by consultations with the Government at home than with the Portuguese ministers. He therefore returned to England to become Secretary of State, when he found Lord Liverpool had lost no time in taking the best means of acting up to his and Wellington's wishes, by obtaining information of the opinions and expectations of the general himself. Lord Liverpool had scarcely been sworn in to the performance of his new duties, when he addressed to Wellington a series of questions, with the view of laying the answers before his colleagues, and taking them as a guide for their future arrangements. He indicated to him his own view, which on subsequent occasions he expressed even more strongly, as being the only conduct compatible with honour, that "it must be our policy to remain in Portugal as long as we could remain there without risking his army." But at the same time he pointed out to him that "as there was every reason to believe that peace had been concluded between France and Austria" (he was writing before any certain intelligence of the treaty had, or could have, arrived in England), it "was probable that the whole military efforts of France would, in a short time, be directed against Spain." And therefore he asked Wellington's opinion of the chance of these efforts "for the complete subjugation of that country" proving successful. And what, with reference to present operations, was more immediately important, whether "they would be likely to make a serious attack upon Portugal before they had acquired a tolerably quiet possession of every part of Spain north of the Sierra Morena: whether they were likely to be able to spare an army sufficient for this purpose before the north and centre of Spain were subdued? If they did make such an attack, what was the prospect of a successful resistance?" And finally, what, to one responsible for not unduly risking a British army in

a hopeless contest, was the most important question of all, "If resistance were not likely to prove ultimately successful, how far the British army would be endangered, and its embarkation be likely to be prevented, by delaying to withdraw it till the French had penetrated in force into Portugal?"

They were sagacious questions, indicating the possession of that happy talent which fixes its attention on points of far more importance, to the disregard of others of inferior though perhaps of more obvious moment. Yet, while the novelty of his appointment necessarily made him feel the want of precise information which had dictated them, he did not conceal his expectation of receiving such an answer as would justify a vigorous prosecution of the contest; but, in putting his enquiries, reminded Wellington that, "notwithstanding all the efforts which the French had already made, they had never at any one period since the rising of the people been in military possession of more than one half of the country." And, while asking his opinion about the probability of their invading Portugal, he expressed a strong doubt whether they could have any prospect of success without employing an army which should at least double the amount of our own, and whether, while Spain was unsubdued, they could possibly spare so great a force for that purpose. And he added an emphatic opinion as an individual that, "though we should not be justified, from want of timely precaution, in sacrificing that army, which formed the greater part of our disposable force, yet it would neither be just nor politic to abandon Portugal before such a measure was absolutely necessary."

Wellington, who probably as yet stood alone among military men in his confidence of the eventual result of the war, had no hesitation in giving expression to that confidence in his answer. He believed that, "if the Spaniards were commonly prudent," it would require "a very large reinforcement indeed to give the enemy military possession of the country; a much larger to effect its complete

subjugation." But he likewise thought, in a military point of view, that, even before they had made themselves masters of Spain they ought to renew their invasion of Portugal; indeed, "that they ought to make the possession of Portugal their first object. But they would not succeed with an army of even 70,000 or 80,000 men unless they made their attack at once, which he had reason to suppose impossible." As to Central Spain, or Old Castile, that province, he pointed out, "was already subdued; and indeed had in all wars been in the possession of the army that was strongest, especially in cavalry." That if, contrary to his expectation, the French should attack Portugal at once, "they would be successfully resisted" he had little doubt, and no doubt at all that, under any circumstances, even "after defeat," he could re-embark his army.

It is remarkable how closely the opinions here expressed coincided with the views of Napoleon himself, as we learn from his correspondence. They are the more striking now that we can reflect on them by the light of their complete fulfilment. But Lord Liverpool's appetite for information was not yet completely satisfied; and before he had received Wellington's answers to his first questions, he addressed him a second letter of enquiry, which shows not only a remarkable acquaintance with the character of the different provinces of Spain, and of the nature of each, but proves, too, how fully the writer was prepared to agree in Wellington's anticipations of the ultimate result of the struggle. For he points out, from the past history of the country, how great will be the difficulties experienced by the enemy before he can subdue those districts which, as being nearer France and further from us, superficial observers might have fancied the most completely at the mercy of an army crossing the Pyrenees, or a fleet sailing from Toulon. The whole letter is well worth preserving, as a proof how felicitous was the choice which Perceval had made when he persuaded the writer to undertake the War Department.

*Private.*

Downing Street, 21st November, 1809.

DEAR LORD WELLINGTON,

I think it may be very material that we should endeavour to procure, if possible, some accurate information respecting the present state of the provinces of Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia.

I have always thought it an unfortunate circumstance unavoidably attendant on the Spanish contest, that the provinces best calculated, from the character and disposition of their inhabitants, to make a formidable resistance to the French, should be the most remote from all intercourse with the British Government. The Aragonese are, as we are informed, universally admitted to be the most warlike people in Spain, and the Catalonians and Valencians the most industrious and active.

The resistance which these provinces have made (though we are imperfectly informed of the particulars) appears to have been more spirited, determined, and systematic than that of any other part of Spain. And though their neighbourhood to the frontiers of France must have given their enemy great advantages over them, yet it does not appear that they ever have been completely subdued ; and, as long as the spirit of resistance continues there, it will be very difficult for Buonaparte to make an adequate effort for the purpose of reducing under his authority the more southern provinces.

It must be obvious that you have it not in your power, even if it were otherwise desirable, to afford any direct military assistance to this part of Spain by means of the army under your command ; and I am not prepared to say that, even under the circumstances of such a change in the Spanish Government as might afford the prospect of a more favourable issue to the contest, it would be advisable to employ a limited moveable corps on the coasts of Catalonia and Valencia.

But I think it may be useful to have at least the means of considering this question fairly and fully, and that at all events this advantage would arise from opening an intercourse with that part of Spain, that we should know how far we might really depend upon them, what they wanted, and whether we had

the means of affording them any assistance which could be considered as important.

If you agree with me in this opinion, I think it may be very advisable that you should send some steady officer on whose judgment you can rely, to provide you with information respecting this part of Spain, and it may be more convenient, on many accounts, that this officer should go from the British army, and communicate with you as commander of his Majesty's forces in the Peninsula, than that he should be sent direct from this country.

The names of two officers have been suggested to me as properly qualified for such service, Colonel Rourke and Major Sturgeon of the Staff Corps. I know nothing of them personally. You are the best judge how far they are competent to the service, and, if so, whether they can be properly spared at this time from the army.

Having opened my mind to you upon this subject, I leave it to you to take such measures upon it as you may judge most advisable. I am confident that you will see the importance, in the event of the war continuing in the Peninsula, of giving your most serious attention to the state of these provinces.

I ought to add, that any steps which you may think it expedient to adopt for this purpose should be communicated to Lord Wellesley, or whoever may be his Majesty's minister in Spain; and he should be informed that the object of sending an officer to those provinces is to obtain military information, and not to interfere in any concerns whatever of a political nature.

I am, &c. &c.

LIVERPOOL.

The answer therefore to his first questions which, shortly after the despatch of this second letter, Lord Liverpool received, coincided closely with his own hopes and judgment. He laid it before his colleagues, accompanied as it had been with an explanation of the need that the army had of reinforcements to supply the vacancies which the last campaign had caused in its ranks, and before the end of the year he was enabled to promise Wellington the reinforcements which he required, and which as yet were not

more than would suffice to keep his army at the strength of 30,000 effective men. And he added a request to know privately the names of the general officers whom Wellington would wish to have under him, that he might send those, and no others. In fact, as he wrote to him in the course of the following summer, "when he accepted the seals of the War Department, he laid it down as a principle that, if the war was to be continued, we ought not to suffer any part of our efforts to be directed to other objects."

With the promise of the troops came also the assurance that "his Majesty felt the strongest inducement, from attachment to his ancient ally, and from every motive of sound policy, to persevere in the contest in the Peninsula as long as it could be maintained with a reasonable expectation of success." He assured the general that "the King fully coincided with the ministers in leaving him a large discretion for his operations;" only bidding him remember "how essential the return of his army must be to the security of his own dominions in the event of Spain and Portugal falling entirely under the dominion of France."

And, while thus leaving him to the almost unfettered exercise of his discretion with respect to his own operations, Lord Liverpool likewise showed the confidence which he himself placed in that discretion in other matters (for the measures to be taken for the maintenance of war were adopted principally in deference to Wellington's judgment, and on his responsibility). And he announced to him also that the King had consented to give the Portuguese the pecuniary aid which he had recommended to enable them to keep on foot such an army as their population could supply, and to officer it with British officers. The adoption of these measures is manifestly owing in no trifling degree to the confidence which Lord Liverpool himself felt in the eventual issue of the contest. And when it is considered how few people in England, whether soldiers or civilians, shared it at this time, that confidence is by itself a proof of



a very statesmanlike and comprehensive judgment. At the same time it in no wise led him to overlook the possibility of failure; but the conclusion of the same despatch enters as carefully into the possibility of a hurried evacuation of the country becoming necessary, and into the measures which, in such an event, would be requisite, as if the army had already met with some disaster, or, like that of Moore, were only seeking to escape one by a rapid retreat to the coast. And Wellington himself must have derived additional assurance and encouragement from knowing that, besides his own brother, he had a friend in the Cabinet who, while he thus displayed entire reliance on his skill and prudence, and a sanguine conviction of his eventual triumph, yet took into consideration the possibility of disappointment, and might therefore be depended on to stand by him as firmly in moments of disaster as of victory.

So consistent was Lord Liverpool in his resolution to concentrate, so long as he should be in office, the whole exertions of the country on the Peninsula, that when Sir John Stuart informed him that, in compliance with Lord Collingwood's suggestions, he had detached a force to expel the French from the Ionian Islands, he instantly warned him that although, "if the occupation by us of those islands would tend materially to the security of Sicily without the necessity of increasing our military force at that time in the Mediterranean, it might on that ground be deemed expedient," it would not be so if it required the slightest addition to the number of the troops under Sir John's command, which indeed it would probably "be necessary to reduce rather than to augment, to provide for the exigencies of the service in other quarters." He concluded by repeating a hint which the general had already received from Lord Castlereagh, that he might be required to detach any troops which he could spare to the eastern coast of Spain, where a diversion might facilitate Wellington's operations by compelling the French to divide their forces.



And he was the more anxious to employ the needlessly large force at present in Sicily for that object, because, as he more than once expressed to Wellington, he felt it a great inconvenience that "the provinces best calculated, from the character and disposition of their inhabitants, to make a formidable resistance to the French, should be the most remote from " our own shores.

## CHAPTER IX.

Lord Liverpool's labours as Secretary for the Colonies—State of Canada—Lord Liverpool's estimate of the difficulties of the Ministry, and of Lord Wellington in Spain—Lord Grenville's censure of the conduct of the war—Lord Liverpool's defence—His panegyric on the spirit of the Portuguese and Spaniards—Lord Grey's motion on Parliamentary Reform—Lord Liverpool's speech—The recent Reform Bill—Opinion of Castanos on the war—Difficulties of providing specie—The loss of Ciudad Rodrigo—Irritability of Wellington—Letter of Lord Liverpool to Wellington.

LORD LIVERPOOL filled the office of Secretary of State for War and the Colonies for about two years and a half, and during that period the attention of the whole Government as well as his own was principally fixed on our Peninsular army. As the importance of its operations and the grandeur of its commander's genius gradually developed, the anxiety of the whole nation became concentrated on it. But as yet he himself, and the energetic statesman whom he had replaced, were, with Wellington's own relations, whose views were naturally coloured by their confidence and pride in him, almost the only men in England who estimated at its true value the field opened to our glory by the French invasion of the Peninsular kingdoms, and by the spirit of unanimous resistance which that most unprovoked of all Napoleon's outrages had awakened in the people of both nations. Yet the very minister who felt most deeply the necessity of devoting his whole attention to this part of his work, was the very one who by his office was the most called upon to devote no trifling portion of his labours

to other subjects ; for, by an absurdity that was never remedied till its practical inconveniences were brought out still more fully by the difficulties of a subsequent war, the care of the colonies, with all their varied interests, was committed to the same department as the war. And the minister whose whole energies, however untiring they might have been, would have been strained to the very uttermost by the task of giving judicious and timely counsel and instruction to the general of an army, and of providing him with means of all kinds for carrying out those instructions, often had his time occupied and his mind distracted by the affairs of the extreme east or west, by clerical establishments in one settlement, and by proposals for establishing new forms of government in another.

In dealing with all these various and dissimilar subjects Lord Liverpool displayed the same extensive and accurate information, and, where the occasion admitted it, at least an equally shrewd and penetrating foresight, as has been already remarked on topics with which he had had more opportunity of making himself previously acquainted. While explaining to one of the chief dignitaries of the Church at home his extreme anxiety to be able to procure the acceptance of chaplaincies in Ceylon by clergymen "of talents and character....likely as such to be respected by the inhabitants of the colony ;" and having with this view asked him to recommend him persons properly qualified (for on no subject was Lord Liverpool more scrupulous throughout his long official career than in his distribution of ecclesiastical patronage, never making it a means of providing for his own relations or dependants), he took occasion to explain to him all the different circumstances which rendered the appointments which he had to offer both eligible and important. Eligible, because the island was particularly healthy ; important, because "Christianity has less difficulties to encounter in its progress in Ceylon than in any other part of the East. The distinction of castes must, while it continues, form a considerable impediment

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to its progress in India. But this distinction does not exist amongst the Ceylonese, who are Buddhists;<sup>1</sup> and it has been consequently found that great facilities have existed in persuading large numbers of the natives to be baptized, though it has been difficult to eradicate afterwards the remains of their superstition."

In Canada his attention was at the same time demanded by a question of greater political importance; one which has on more than one occasion within our time caused our statesmen the greatest anxiety, and which has only within a very short time been settled on what may be hoped to

<sup>1</sup> On this passage I have been favoured with the following comment by my kind friend the late Bishop of Ceylon.—"The extract you submit for my opinion from Lord Liverpool's papers is in the main correct, though not quite so. The distinction of castes *does* exist among the Ceylonese Buddhists; but it partakes more of a social than of a religious character, and is therefore neither so bigoted nor so obtrusive as in India; but in the north and on the north-east coast of the island, occupied by the Tanish race from India, to the entire exclusion of the Singhalese, both Brahminism and caste are in full force. Education and missionary work has made some impression on them; and is progressing favorably but slowly. In the south and centre the Singhalese race and language and religion (that of Buddhism) prevail, and to this portion of the island Lord Liverpool's remark is more applicable, great numbers under the Dutch rule (which preceded our own) having been induced rather than persuaded to be baptized in the hope of Government employment. Their system of parochial subdivisions and registration was very complete, and none were admitted on their lists (called *thombas*) without compulsory baptism. These registers I found to be still cherished by thousands of hollow professors of Christianity, who could see no inconsistency in calling themselves 'Buddhist Christians.' This is a real hindrance to missionary progress, but Christian education in the last fifteen or twenty years has done its work more thoroughly, and we may well be hopeful of better fruit." When it is recollected that Ceylon was among our very latest acquisitions, the accuracy of Lord Liverpool's information concerning its people, in which one who has had such pre-eminent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the island as Bishop Chapman finds so little to correct, is a remarkable evidence of the honest and judicious diligence with which he applied himself to every part of his duties; and may well incline us to rely on his statements respecting other matters on which a knowledge of the precise truth was more easily attainable.

prove both a permanent and a safe footing. The bill of 1791, by which the province had been parted into two divisions, had not been found to answer the main object which had been hoped from it, that of quenching the animosities which existed between the old French inhabitants and the more modern settlers of English blood. And the present commander-in-chief in the colony, Sir James Craig, wrote to Lord Liverpool, in the summer of 1810, to suggest some modifications of the Act which he had reason to think would be acceptable to the French party, who, as was not unnatural, were the aggressors in the disputes which had arisen, and were now looking with eagerness which was not dissembled, and with wishes which could hardly be mistaken, on our contest with France. He looked at the question solely with regard to his position of responsibility for the tranquillity of the province. Lord Liverpool was compelled to take a wider view, which he explained in the following letter :

DEAR SIR,

I do not know whether my public despatches by this mail will prove satisfactory to you.

I can assure you that the subject of your very able letter has been most anxiously considered, not only by those who are immediately the King's confidential servants, but by the Attorney-General and by the Master of the Rolls, who has much local knowledge of Canada from having passed the early part of his life in that country. It would be wasting your time to repeat to you in a private letter those considerations which you will find fully brought before you in my public despatch. But there is one circumstance to which I would wish particularly to draw your attention, a circumstance to which I have obliquely alluded in my public letter, but which for reasons sufficiently obvious it was impossible for me to explain in such a letter so explicitly as I can in a private communication.

You may rely upon it, that if the subject of the constitution of Canada was brought under the discussion of the British Parliament, the cause of the Canadians would be warmly supported by all the democrats and friends of reform in this country. It

would most probably receive the support likewise, under present circumstances, of Lord Grenville, the original framer of the Act of 1791, and of his friends. The support of so powerful a combination, even if it was for the moment successfully resisted, could not fail to have the effect of encouraging the factious and disaffected in Canada. They would look to the chance of their friends coming into Government for a revision and alteration of the system which might at this time be adopted. In short, we should have the game of the American war played over again.

The object of Opposition would be, in the first instance, to embarrass the Government, but by the measures they would adopt for that purpose they might separate the North American colonies from the mother country. Another consideration impresses itself very strongly on our minds, that every endeavour would be made in Parliament to connect the questions of Government in Canada with the Catholic question in Ireland. It may be admitted that some connexion might not unfairly be considered as existing between them. The introduction, however, of such a topic might be productive of the most unfortunate results, both in Ireland and Canada, especially at the present time.

We are therefore clearly of opinion that the great object ought to be to keep the subject of Canada out of Parliament as long as possible, unless a connexion could be proved between the popular party in Canada and the Government of France.

In that case I am convinced there would be no difficulty in carrying the most effectual measures, even the abolition of the Constitution of 1791. But, in any other alternative except this, I dread no proceeding so strongly as an appeal to Parliament.

In communicating to you these sentiments, I can assure you that we are all fully convinced of the evils which have arisen from the Act of 1791, and of the absurdity of attempting to give what is falsely called the British constitution to a people whose education, habits, and prejudices render them incapable of receiving it. But the evil is done; our steps cannot be easily retraced. We must endeavour, in the first instance, to make the best use we can of the instrument which has been put into our hands, but above all we must avoid tampering with it. If Parliament is to be called upon for its interposition, it must be

by the most decisive and effectual measures, such as will prevent altogether the recurrence of the evils again ; and it appears to us that it would be in vain to expect the adoption of such measures from Parliament without a case far stronger, and very different in its nature, than that which we could bring at present under their consideration.

With respect to any military attempt of Buonaparte upon Canada, I can assure you that at present his hands are too full for any such operation. It is evident that he has not the military means of making as large an effort in Spain and Portugal as his interest and reputation require. As long as the contest can be maintained in that quarter upon its present scale we need be under little apprehension for more distant objects.

I am happy in being able to acquaint you with what I have no doubt you will have heard from many other quarters, and particularly from some of your professional friends, that the events of this campaign have exceeded our most sanguine expectations, and certainly afford no very unreasonable expectation that the contest in the Peninsula may finally prove successful.

At all events, if the French are not expelled from the country, many years must elapse before they can obtain sufficiently quiet possession of it to enable them to avail themselves of its resources, and to direct them against the King's dominions.

I am, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

The mention of the contest in the Peninsula, contained in the above letter, shows how real was the confidence which he felt in its ultimate result. And he acted with as much resolution as he wrote, losing no time in sending out reinforcements sufficient to keep up Wellington's force always "at the amount which he considered as necessary, 30,000 men fit for duty," and with them every kind of supply which the general thought requisite, and which the resources of the kingdom could furnish. But he had in his way as great difficulties to contend with as Wellington himself. Some of them are explained in his private letters to Wellington, from which it is but fair to his memory here to give copious quotations, because, without a candid examination of them, it would be impossible to form an adequate idea



of his merit in surmounting them. It was a great thing during these eventful years that the minister on whose department the efficiency of the army depended, even more than on the general himself, should encourage the general by candid support, by the most implicit and judicious confidence, and, above all, by the fellow-feeling as to the eventual issue of the struggle, and as to the duty imposed on us, by our national honour, to persevere in it to the last. In some instances the letters also show a great capacity for organization, combined with a great insight into character, and even into the professional ability of different officers. It is the more necessary to point this out, because it is well known that the Opposition in Parliament made complaints which from time to time escaped Wellington, on occasional deficiencies of different kinds which impeded his movements, the text for furious denunciations of the Ministry at the time; and that since that day writers have sought to enhance his glory by dwelling on these deficiencies, and inveighing against the Government for suffering them to exist; keeping out of sight the fact that he himself, when not under the influence of momentary irritation, admitted that the ministers had done all that men in their position possibly could do, and that the real cause of the disappointments which he at times experienced was to be found partly in their own political difficulties, and partly in the state of Europe, which, as in the case of his frequent want of money, rendered it actually difficult to procure the precious metals in sufficient quantities, and had reduced us, for our own internal trade, to resort to a paper currency.

This latter difficulty is certainly not exaggerated in the following extract from a private letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Wellington, written in December of this same year, 1809, the first year of the war as far as his army was concerned :

The expenditure of this country has become enormous; and, if the war continues, we must look to economy. I do not believe so great a continued effort has ever been made by this country,

combining the military and pecuniary aid together, as his Majesty is making for Portugal and Spain. The respective Governments of these countries should be made sensible of the truth of this position, and should feel the necessity of making extraordinary exertions for their own support.

I think it material to draw your attention to the mode of defraying the expense which it has been agreed to incur for the Portuguese army. We are naturally anxious to know, with some certainty, that we have our money's worth for our money. It is very desirable, therefore, that the sums advanced by Great Britain for the Portuguese force should be applied directly to defraying the expenses of that force, and should not pass circuitously through the hands of the Portuguese Government; in which case we might not be certain that it was not diverted to other purposes.

It was not easy to guard against such a misappropriation of our treasures in Portugal, and still harder in Spain, where the corruption of all classes, even of the highest, was as general as their presumption and obstinacy. An extract from another letter, written on the same day, while it makes light of some circumstances which looked formidable on paper, alludes, though without dwelling too much on them, to the difficulties which beset the Ministry itself. As to the campaign, it informs Wellington that :

It is understood here from a messenger of Stahremberg's, who has passed through France, that 80,000 men have been ordered to march to Bayonne. If Buonaparte cannot send a larger force, I should not feel much alarmed at the prospect. I think we may, however, rely that he will make every possible exertion to subdue Spain, and that his first great efforts will be directed against the British army. All our measures should be calculated on this view of the subject. It is a great satisfaction to us to find that you entertain a just notion of the eventual difficulties to which you may be exposed, and that you have not undervalued them on the one hand, or exaggerated them on the other.

Lord Wellesley is installed, and we are going on very smoothly.

It is impossible to form any calculation yet of our strength in Parliament. We have some awkward questions to manage at the outset (particularly that of Walcheren), which must put us under considerable difficulties. I trust, however, that by prudence and temper we shall get through them.

He was estimating the difficulties of himself and his colleagues in the very same frame of mind which he praised in the general, neither undervaluing nor exaggerating them; and, as to the progress of the campaign, showing a keen and correct appreciation of the course likely to be taken by Napoleon, and of the force which he would find necessary for the attainment of his object. But probably, with all his experience of Lord Grenville's inability, through sheer ill-temper, to see two sides of a question, he was hardly prepared for the degree to which party rancour blinded him and the rest of the Opposition, when Parliament re-assembled. In the debate on the address Lord Grenville denounced with almost equal vehemence the general and the ministers. "His heart was full, and he must give vent to his feelings." And his feelings led him to pour forth such a torrent of unreasoning invective as has rarely been heard. He attacked every one concerned in the expedition to the Scheldt. And this part of his harangue was in truth plausible, for it could not be denied that in some quarter or other there had been great mismanagement. But he marred the effect of it by being equally if not more vehement on the subject of the campaign on the Tagus, for which, in a subsequent speech, a few days later, he even urged the House to refuse its thanks to Lord Wellington: declaring that it was impossible to justify him for fighting a battle at Talavera, and denying that the result of that battle had been a victory to our arms. Lord Grey, a constant critic of all military operations, even went beyond his friend in his condemnation of both ministers and general, declaring himself unable to give utterance to the indignation with which he had heard of honours having been conferred on Wellington resembling those which had formerly been bestowed upon

Marlborough, and forgetting all the ordinary restraints of Parliamentary courtesy in his description of the imbecility and misconduct of the ministers, and of the miseries which they had inflicted on their country. It must be stated, to Lord Grey's honour, that he subsequently recanted his denunciations of the conduct of the war; which Lord Grenville never did. But at the opening of this session he fully rivalled his coadjutor in vehemence; and the two made motion after motion designed in the first place to eject the Ministry, but all having the unavoidable effect, whether they succeeded or failed, of embarrassing the defenders of the nation, and with it of the common cause of freedom in Europe.

On another occasion Lord Grenville ventured on the most dangerous of all acts of temerity, prophecy. He asked, "Was there any man who heard him, who in his conscience believed that even the sacrifice of the whole of the brave British army would secure the kingdom of Portugal? And if he received from any person an answer in affirmation of that opinion, he should be able to judge, by that answer, of the capacity of such a person for the government of this country, or even for the transaction of public business in a deliberative assembly. He had always thought the enterprise impossible, but now it was known to all the people of the country that it had become certainly impossible." He denounced the ministers for persisting in such an enterprise. He denounced the general as an officer possessed of no military quality but courage. He denounced our envoy in Portugal for erroneous views of the capabilities of the country, and for an unwise method of carrying out even his own ill-conceived plans, and he insisted on the instant withdrawal of the British army from Portugal. "The campaigns in Spain and Portugal had already cost this nation the lives of 12,000 of its brave soldiers. It was now to be considered whether any further sacrifice was to be incurred in this hopeless contest. He would conjure their Lordships not to go on in the fruitless profusion of life and treasure; but, while

there was yet time, arrest the fatal progress of national calamity and disgrace. Portugal, so far from the most defensible, was the least defensible country in Europe."

The relation of these efforts of disappointed ambition and impotent malice is not a purposeless waste of time. They are recapitulated here for the lesson they afford of the degree to which the spirit of faction can drive men of even high ability, and for the sake of the at least equally instructive warning that in political debate every speech and argument should be judged of by its own validity, and not by the presumed purity of intention or intellectual capacity of the speaker. Lord Liverpool, as was his wont, met these different motions with a straightforward opposition, which began by brushing away all the flimsy subterfuges and artful screens with which a show of an attempt had been made to disguise the real object of his assailants. In whatever form, whether of substantive motion or specious amendment, they brought the question forward, he treated their different steps as "virtual motions for the removal of the Ministry, and for the abandonment of our allies beyond the Pyrenees." His defence of the Government was complete on every point but one, where it must be admitted to have been partially defective. He affirmed truly that the enterprise undertaken against the fortresses on the Scheldt was "the greatest expedition ever sent from this country upon any occasion," and that "the object, the destruction of the enemy's naval preparations at Antwerp, was one for which it was worth while to encounter a considerable risk." But when he added, "That it failed in its ulterior object was not to be attributed to any fault or failure in the plan, or in the execution of it; to any neglect of the Executive Government, or to any misconduct of the army or navy; but to circumstances which it was impossible to control, to the elements, and to the unusual state of the weather at that season," he advanced an excuse which his hearers can hardly have accepted as well founded, and which posterity has not endorsed. For it was notorious that the want of success was solely owing

to the dilatory incapacity of Lord Chatham;<sup>1</sup> and it was almost equally well known that he had owed his appointment to the pertinacious partiality of the King himself, and not to the judgment of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Probably this latter fact contributed to make all parties desire to avoid that part of the question. And on no other topic had Lord Liverpool any difficulty in carrying conviction to the minds of his hearers. He had unquestionably reason on his side when he reproached Lord Grenville and the other assailants of the Government for "the dangerous and impolitic appeal which they had made to the passions of the people, by displaying to them in aggravated colours the losses of the army and the pecuniary burdens they were called on to support." And, in reply to their description of the country which was the scene of war as one destitute of points of defence, he was not content with merely disproving the accuracy of that description on the testimony of military officers better acquainted with the country than those who thus condemned it, but he reminded the House of a fact which, except by Wellington and himself, had not hitherto been much attended to, that we had on our side what was of greater consequence in such a contest than any advantages to be derived from the character of the country, the character of the people. In the kingdoms beyond the Rhine "the moment their armies were defeated the countries

<sup>1</sup> Alison, in a note on chap. lx. § 13 of his history, has accumulated a number of authorities beyond all suspicion on this point, testifying that the plan of the Government was well conceived, and could hardly have failed to succeed in other hands. Pelet, the author or authors of the "*Victoires et Conquêtes*," Jomini, and, above all, Napoleon himself, according to both O'Meara and Montholon, agree that, when the expedition first reached the Scheldt, Antwerp was so scantily garrisoned as to be wholly at our mercy. The loss of a few days sufficed to put that important town out of danger. But even after Antwerp was safe, the naval officers (as the present writer has shown in his "*History of the British Navy*," xxxiii.) strongly pressed the adoption of other operations of which they could have ensured the success, and which would have been of great importance; but Lord Chatham would not listen to them.

were conquered. The people were everywhere neutral, and uniformly remained tame spectators of the contest which was to decide their fate. But in Spain our armies had the support of the whole armed population, which throughout two campaigns had fought under every circumstance of adversity and disadvantage, and were still as resolute not to yield to the foreign invader as at the beginning of the struggle. Undoubtedly the Spanish armies when by themselves had suffered some severe defeats. But the noble baron had spoken as if war had not its chances and reverses, as if the risks in military operations were not always proportioned to the magnitude of the contest, and had triumphantly asked, What had we gained in the Peninsula? What had we gained? We had gained the hearts of the whole population of Spain and Portugal. We had gained that of which no triumphs, no successes of the enemy could deprive us. In Portugal such was the affection of the inhabitants that there was not a want of the British soldier that was not instantly and cheerfully supplied. In Spain the universal feeling, even in that awful moment of national convulsion and existing revolution, was that of the most complete deference to the British envoy and Government; and so perfect was their confidence in both that they placed their fleet under the orders of the British admiral. Whatever might be the issue of the contest, to this country would always remain the proud satisfaction of having done its duty. He trusted we should never abandon Spain so long as any hope remained of the possibility of ultimate success. Their lordships were bound by every sentiment of honour and good faith to support a people who had themselves given proofs of honour, good faith, and bravery that had not been exceeded by any nation that ever existed." The day was not far distant, it came even before he quitted the office which he was then holding, when the murmurs of even his most rancorous opponents were silenced by the glorious and undeniable success which attended the perseverance of the Government in the course which he had thus laid down for it.



But when even those who did not, like Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, proclaim the incompetence of the British general, and deny that Talavera had been a victory, might yet reasonably doubt whether the complete rout of the principal Spanish army at Oçana<sup>1</sup> did not more than counterbalance it with regard to the probability of Spain making a permanently successful resistance to the invader, at such a time to speak nothing but words of hope and encouragement required not only a clear foresight, a capacity for taking a comprehensive view of the whole question in all its chances of fortune whether for good or evil, but the equally statesmanlike attribute of resolute courage, of firmness to withstand not only the assaults of his antagonists, but the doubts of his friends, the commendable anxieties and uneasiness of the whole people.

One of the motions by which the Government was assailed in this session was brought forward by Lord Grey, and referred to the general state of the nation ; and one topic on which he dilated has not yet lost its interest. Undeterred by the convulsions into which the atrocities of the French Revolutionists were throwing the whole world, he had in 1792 allowed himself to be made the organ of the revolutionary societies which had established themselves on their model in England, and in that character had then brought forward a motion on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, which Pitt, though in less dangerous times he had shown himself a friend of the principle, with a wiser patriotism now refused to countenance it on the express ground of the "anarchy and confusion" which at such a moment such a measure must produce. It could hardly be said that the present time, while we were engaged in a most arduous war, was more favorable for its consideration ; but Lord Grey now brought

<sup>1</sup> At Oçana, on the 3d of November, the Spanish General Areizaga, with 50,000 men, was utterly defeated by Soult with 30,000. He lost 20,000 prisoners and nearly all his artillery and ammunition. And his overthrow led to a smaller army, under the Duke del Parque, receiving an almost equally decisive defeat from Kellermann before the end of the same month.

it forward as a subject the neglect of which was a grave fault in the Cabinet. He admitted, indeed, that there was "some difference between his present sentiments and his former impressions" on the question. And he showed how great that difference was by a denunciation of "those vague and general speculations in which some men would wish to engage;" and by a declaration that he should wish to take for his guide and rule in the framing of any measure of reform "the fixed principles of the constitution;" and that "the remedy which he sought was one which should be limited by the existing defects, should be marked out by the constitution itself, and should not launch out into any extravagance of theory." But, though Lord Grey had been thus guarded in the enunciation of his present sentiments, Lord Liverpool wisely thought it was a matter on which in so critical a season no doubt should be allowed to exist as to the feelings of the Government. And in his reply he delivered his opinion, in which all his colleagues coincided, that while "they had no objection to an economical reform," they would never countenance any measure which went beyond "a practical remedy for practical grievances." Among these he did not class the inequalities in the Parliamentary representation of the people on which Lord Grey had dwelt, but which he affirmed to be only apparent, and to have no reality. On the contrary, "he would say that he believed there never was a period in our history when the representation of the people in Parliament was less unequal. That it was unequal in theory he would admit, but that theoretic inequality he regarded as one of the greatest advantages of our constitution. This was the opinion of that enlightened statesman Mr. Burke, who said that it was this peculiarity in its constitution which made it, instead of an assembly of deputies, an entire and perfect deliberative meeting. For himself, he had carefully examined all the plans of reform that had been submitted to Parliament at various times, and he would fairly state that there was not one of them to which he did not see insuperable objections. One of these plans, brought forward by the noble mover,

certainly not the most objectionable, aimed at making population and not property the basis of representation. Such a change he thought could not but be exceedingly injurious in its effects."

These few sentences, weighty in themselves, derive a particular importance from the office to which the speaker soon rose, and which, as he never changed his opinion on the subject, marked out the line to which the King's Government, as long as it was taken from the Tory party, steadily adhered; those who were looked on as its most liberal section, such as Canning and his school, being to the full as much opposed to any tampering with the existing composition of Parliament as the most tenacious adherents of old customs, and adopting the very arguments on which Lord Liverpool now relied. It was not till he had passed away that the champion of Reform, to whom he now opposed himself, carried a measure on the subject which popular clamour induced him to make far more sweeping than he seems at this time to have contemplated; though after its enactment it was acquiesced in with cheerfulness, even by those who had most strenuously resisted it, and, in the perilous excitement of the third French Revolution, even with satisfaction, as being supposed to have taken away from all but the most profligate demagogues all pretence for exciting the people to discontent, and to have contributed greatly to the feeling which made the lower classes rally round their sovereign at a moment when scarcely another throne in Europe could be looked on as secure. But that Reform Bill of 1832 is now in its turn superseded and swept away. The craving for change, not in order to remove acknowledged grievances, but merely for the sake of change, and to gratify those vague theories of equality which Lord Liverpool now denounced, and even Lord Grey repudiated, has been stimulated till it threatens to become insatiable; and, if the assertion of the advocates of the bill of 1867 be correct, that it is but the necessary consequence and complement of the previous measure, it may well be doubted whether Lord Liverpool and his Tory colleagues

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were not counselling the nation more for its permanent advantage when they resisted the first approaches to reform, than those more popular statesmen who excited the populace to demand and then granted a measure which is thus proved to have been merely an incitement to require more, and an instrument to compel the concession of one which must prove at no distant day absolutely incompatible with the preservation of a single fragment of the ancient constitution.

On every division in these debates the Government was supported by decisive majorities in both Houses; and this naturally gave them confidence to proceed more firmly in prosecuting their own views as to the war. Lord Liverpool was a little embarrassed and perplexed by the Spanish General Castanos. At the beginning of 1810 that officer was appointed to the command of the chief Spanish army; an occurrence at which in one point of view Lord Liverpool was greatly pleased, because "he knew from experience that he was the most right-minded Spaniard who had appeared since the Revolution; and he believed him to be sincerely and zealously attached to the British connexion. He had also been so principally concerned in all those events which had led to the present state of things in Spain that it was scarcely possible for him under any circumstances to look forward to any prospect of terms with the enemy." But though his steady fidelity to the cause in which he was embarked could thus be depended on, "it appeared by his letters that he thought unfavorably of the issue of the contest in Spain upon the principles on which it was then conducted," even while he believed that "it would not be possible for the French to subdue the country" completely. And the knowledge that such was his language caused Lord Liverpool deep anxiety, since he naturally attributed great weight to the sentiments of one who had such means of forming a correct judgment, and such strong reasons to desire to come to the opposite opinion; and he consequently began to "fear from his account that the enemy might prove successful in

passing the Sierra Morena, and in getting possession of Seville. In that case," he supposed, "the Spanish armies must retreat to the island of Leon, and every effort must be made for the defence and safety of Cadiz." In such an event he anticipated that the Spaniards might solicit Wellington himself to furnish troops from his army to reinforce the garrison, and he proceeded therefore to consult the general whether, if such a request were made, he would be able to comply with it "consistently with the security of Portugal ; and, if it should become necessary to make an option between the two objects, which ought to be preferred ;" adhering to his usual practice of setting the case to be decided on in every point of view before Wellington, supplying him with all the information in his power, and then leaving him to regulate his conduct by his own judgment. Nothing can show more plainly the resolution of some of the Opposition at the time, and of some of the critics of the Ministry since that day, to find fault, right or wrong, with all that they did and all that they did not do, than the circumstance that Lord Liverpool's conduct in thus leaving Wellington unfettered to use his own discretion has been attacked as if it were a mean evasion of the responsibility which belonged to himself and his colleagues as ministers. He expressed his reasons for so doing to the general in a letter written towards the end of this year : "We wish you to be governed on this point" [that of bringing the French to action] "entirely by your own discretion ; and that you should neither abstain from attack nor engage in it in consequence of any opinion which may be supposed to be entertained in this country. If it were even possible (which it is not) to form a just opinion here on such a subject, the change of circumstances and succession of events would be very likely to render that opinion, which might have been good when it was formed, bad when it came to be acted upon. In short you know our objects to be the defence of Portugal and the support of the cause of the Peninsula, as long as they are practicable ; and I trust you feel that you possess the entire confidence of the

Government with respect to the measures which it may be desirable to adopt for these purposes, whether they may be of a cautious or of a more enterprising character."

Candid judges, with minds unperturbed by the temporary struggles of party, will be of opinion that this is the only spirit in which instructions ought to be framed by a Cabinet composed of civilians for a military commander; that, if he deserves to be trusted with the safety of an army at all, he certainly deserves to be trusted to know how to direct its operations better than they. And they will be supported in so deciding by no less an authority than that of Nelson, who stated his own rule of conduct to be to consider that it was impossible for the ministers "to tell exactly at a distance" what ought to be done, but to remember their general object, the destruction of the French, and to carry out that object in the most effective way, whether that way were in accordance with, or even in open contradiction to, the letter of their instructions. At the same time it is impossible to avoid remarking that, if ever a Ministry could with wisdom fetter the discretion of a distant general, the comprehensive views of the whole question, and the capacity for judging, not merely of the general features of the operations on both sides, but even of professional details, during these years displayed by Lord Liverpool, would have justified the existing Cabinet in being more precise and minute in their instructions.

To aid Wellington's judgment on the question now submitted to him, Lord Liverpool added that "there could be no doubt but that in this country a higher value was set upon Cadiz (connected with the Spanish fleet, arsenal, &c.), than upon Lisbon; but," he proceeded, "even if the value of the two objects were equal, is it not true that Cadiz and some part of the south of Spain might be defended, if Portugal were, for the time, lost; but that Portugal could not long be defended if Andalusia were in possession of the French? It is material likewise to consider how far under such circumstances the Portuguese army could be induced to retreat to the southern provinces of Portugal, and to

keep up thereby a line of communication with the British and Spanish armies."

So sound did Wellington himself think the views expressed in this letter of the mutual importance of Cadiz and Portugal to one another, that, while it was on its way to him, he sent a division under General Graham to reinforce the garrison, and in a short time that all-important city was placed out of danger. So far Lord Liverpool's mind was at ease; but on other points he was full of anxiety and perplexity. The history of that period of the war has been often, it might perhaps be said generally, represented as if the general alone had felt assured of ultimate success, and as if one of the hardest of his tasks had been to inspire with a portion of his own confidence and courage a weak and desponding Ministry. Lord Liverpool's letters, as we have seen, disprove this notion to a very great extent. He himself, and certainly most if not all of his colleagues, apart from their reliance on Wellington's abilities, which they fully appreciated even before his return to Portugal in the preceding spring, felt a strong conviction that they had found a field where they could successfully stem the further advance of Napoleon's ambition. And in the reasons which had dictated this opinion it would be more correct to say that they coincided with Wellington than that they borrowed them from him. The despondency existed, not in the Ministry, but in the nation at large. The factious cavils of the Opposition concurred with what seems the natural propensity of every people to blame those who for the time are their rulers. The refutation of these cavils by the ministers was refused the weight which properly belonged to it, because it seemed like an eulogy of their own prudence, a pleading of their own cause; and thus the murmurs of those who lamented the death of Moore, who sneered at Wellington's imprudence and wanton rashness in fighting unnecessary battles, and even denied that a victory had been won at Talavera, gained more credit with the unreflecting and impatient many than those who pointed out that he had already twice expelled the French from



Portugal; that on every occasion on which the English and French soldiers had met in conflict the French had been worsted in spite of a considerable superiority in numbers; and that it was plain that throughout Wellington was able to regulate his operations by his own preconceived ideas, and that the enemy were unable to compel him to take a single step unsanctioned by his own deliberate judgment.

From believing the description given by Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, and their followers and copyists in the House of Commons, of the character of the last campaign, the people in general, and even military men who ought to have known better, were easily led to augur still worse of that which was to come. In March 1810, Lord Liverpool, while expressing to Wellington the unabated sanguineness of the Ministry itself, is forced to add, "I should apprise you, however, that a very considerable degree of alarm exists in this country respecting the safety of the British army in Portugal. The chances of successful defence are considered here by all persons, military as well as civil, so improbable," that there would be but little sympathy for the general, and no approval, if, in consequence of his persevering in what those critics would call "a desperate resistance," the army were to meet with any disaster, however trivial. Lord Liverpool evidently foresaw that, in the event of any such mishap befalling it, the popular clamour would become so ardent as to render it impossible for the Government to persist in keeping an army in the field, though even in that case he was resolved not to withdraw from the struggle, but to throw the bulk of our force into Cadiz, arguing that "15,000 or 20,000 British troops might make it secure for the remainder of the war; and such a garrison would either oblige the French to evacuate the south of Spain, or would compel them to keep in that part of the country an army of at least three times the amount of the British force."

Therefore, even if defeated both by the enemy in the field and by his antagonists in Parliament, he would not

abandon hope while one foot of ground remained on which a British regiment could make a stand. But the disparagement of our own chances of success, and the panegyrics of our enemy's genius and power, both equally ceaseless, inevitably embarrassed and hindered the Ministry in their attempts to supply the general with all the resources which he required, and which they were eager to furnish. And, even if this had not been the case, such a scarcity of specie at this time prevailed throughout Europe that there was a great difficulty in providing money. It cannot be better shown than in the following extracts from a letter of Lord Liverpool to Wellington, written at the end of June in this year, the last portion of which exhibits also the earnestness with which the whole Cabinet, and especially the writer, encountered, and from the first had resolved to withstand and to overcome, all difficulties. Thus he writes :

I can assure you that we are making every effort to supply you with specie. The Bank has had, from the beginning, the most positive directions to purchase all that can be procured in the markets ; but, notwithstanding the prosperous state of the trade of the country, they are in such distress with respect to specie, that they were positively in want, about a fortnight ago, of a hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of internal circulation. I should think that there must be large quantities of specie in Portugal ; for the balance of trade between Portugal and Great Britain is at all times in favour of the former, and I am not aware of any circumstance which can lead to an export of specie from Portugal to other countries, except for the purpose of purchasing corn. It would be a great relief if the Portuguese Government would take a considerable part of the subsidy in kind. The Americans, who will bring flour both to Lisbon and Cadiz, would be too glad to receive bills upon England for it. . . . We should feel mortified to the greatest degree if the contest in the Peninsula should fail for want of pecuniary means. No Government could attach more importance to the continuance of it than the present, or be more disposed to direct the whole disposable efforts of the country to this one object. When I accepted the seals of the

War Department, I laid it down as a principle that, if the war was to be continued in Portugal and Spain, we ought not to suffer any part of our efforts to be directed to other objects. Upon this principle we have acted, and are still acting. Every regiment which is serviceable, and every general officer of reputation and experience whose station in the army admitted of his being employed in Portugal and Spain, has been selected for this service. . . . If any means can be found for providing for our wants in the one matter of specie, we shall, I trust, get through the campaign creditably, and perhaps brilliantly; and I cannot avoid entertaining hopes of ultimate success.

In one way even the general excellence of our credit added to our difficulties; as in a letter written a week or two afterwards Lord Liverpool (though far from wishing the case different) writes:

I hope we shall not be disappointed in our expectation of supplies from Vera Cruz; and, if they should arrive in the course of the next six weeks, we shall do tolerably well. We cannot expect to carry on war on a large scale without some difficulties: those of a pecuniary nature are perhaps more trying than any others, but they are, at the same time, most common. We are in general such good paymasters when compared to our enemies, that it is very difficult for us to resort to those shifts and expedients to which they are in the constant habit of recurring whenever a pressure of difficulties comes upon them, or the circumstances of the service require them.

His letters to General Graham in Cadiz are in the same strain. And it may be that he had in his mind the jealousies which had already begun to divide the French marshals when he forwarded to Graham copies of the despatches which he had written to Wellington, and "recommended Graham to have the most unreserved communications with him;" not only because "the whole in the Peninsula was under Wellington's general control but because it was also of the utmost importance the arrangements which were made with respect to part of it should be made, as far as possible, on a regular system, and that the military operations

the security of Lisbon and Cadiz should be connected on the same principle."

Many of the injunctions and counsels contained in these letters may appear to refer either to petty details, unworthy the notice of history, or to matters of course. But it is on apparently trivial points that the success or failure of great operations often turns, nor are any things more apt to be overlooked than those which seem matters of course. It is the peculiar characteristic of men fit for posts of the highest trust not to think such beneath their attention. And the interest which Lord Liverpool's correspondence shows him to have taken in such matters of minute detail, is also a proof how especially well-suited he was for the post which at this crisis was the most arduous and important in the whole Government.

The summer of 1810 did not pass without one great misfortune, not indeed to our own armies, but to our allies, in the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, which, greatly to his personal chagrin, Wellington was forced to leave to its fate. Probably no single incident in the whole war shows in a stronger light how singularly fit he was for such a command as was entrusted to him at such a time. For it was by no means certain that he was not strong enough at least to deliver the garrison. The Portuguese were almost as eager as the Spaniards that he should make an attempt to save the place ; because, while it remained untaken, the French could hardly renew their invasion of Portugal. The gallantry of the garrison itself, and of its veteran commander, Andreas Herrasti, was a powerful incentive to try to succour them ; and if Wellington had looked not only to the chances of success in the enterprise, but even to the credit of the whole campaign, instead of to the general issue of the entire war, he would certainly have attempted to save them. But he felt bound to take, as he warned Herrasti himself, "a larger view of the interests of the allies," as concerned the whole war ; and, in comparison with them, to disregard the preservation of any "single town, however important ;" and feeling that the "irrevo-

cable loss of the whole cause would be the consequence of any failure in the attempt to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo," he decided that from such an attempt it was his duty to refrain. Still it could not be denied that its surrender to the French bore the appearance of discomfiture and disaster. And it is therefore creditable to Lord Liverpool also that he was in no degree discouraged by it; on the contrary, he wrote to Wellington in terms of decided commendation for forbearing to risk a battle for its defence, reminding him that "the attitude which he had been able to assume on the frontier had certainly had the effect of protracting the siege, and obliging the enemy to collect together the great means which they had been compelled to employ."

Allusion has been made to the mistaken view which some writers have taken of the confidence entertained by the ministers in the result of the war. And it cannot be denied that they find grounds for their theory in certain isolated portions of Wellington's despatches. But the truth is that this greatest of generals, though patient beyond all men in action, was rarely, at any time of his life, patient or measured in his language. He was at this time not only engaged in one of the most arduous labours that ever rested on one man's shoulders, but he was embarrassed in the performance of it by all kinds of irritating difficulties; not only by the obstinacy of the Spaniards and the disinclination of the Portuguese for military service,<sup>1</sup> but by the misconduct of his own troops. Long before the war was over he had brought them to a perfection of discipline and consideration for the people among whom they were serving of which no other army in the world has shown an equal example. But, in his earlier campaigns, the moment that

<sup>1</sup> It was often necessary to send the Portuguese recruits in chains to head-quarters to prevent them deserting before they joined their regiments. And in 1809, when he had just expelled the French from Oporto, the municipal authorities of that very city made grievous complaints of his pressing them to lend him 10,000*l* for the use of the army, though they were assured that it should be repaid instantly.

the excitement of actual warfare ceased, they broke through all rules, and committed gross outrages on the natives, which created a great bitterness of feeling on their part, and provoked the general into declaring that "he had long been of opinion that a British army could bear neither success nor failure, and that their present conduct proved the truth of this judgment." The officers, too, were becoming weary of the war, and were disgusting him with constant requests for leave. And when, in addition to these and other numberless annoyances, any momentary want of supplies of any kind pressed on him, he was apt to give vent to his mortification in terms which he himself in his cooler moments admitted to be unfounded.

One of his letters, in which he addressed his complaints to Lord Liverpool, produced an answer which is worth preserving, not only for the excellent temper with which it soothes the general's vexation while refuting his complaints, but also for the picture it affords of the difficulties with which the Cabinet had to contend at home, and of the vigorous and resolute efforts which they were nevertheless making to place the means of success within his reach ; efforts so great that, with all their anxiety to maintain the contest to the very last, indeed partly because of that very anxiety, they felt it doubtful whether the country would or could long bear so violent a strain :

*Private.*

London, September 10th, 1810.

MY DEAR LORD WELLINGTON,

I have received your letter, marked "private," of the 19th ult. I am at a loss to conceive upon what grounds you can have supposed that the King's ministers had no confidence in the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal. I should have thought that their language in Parliament must have had the effect of satisfying the world as to their public sentiments upon this subject. It certainly exposed them not only to the censure of Opposition, but even to the animadversion of some of their friends, for what was represented to be their extreme sanguineness in the cause of the Peninsula. With respect to their

*private* sentiments, I never knew a question on which there was less difference of opinion in Cabinet than upon the subject of Portugal; either as to the expediency of persevering in the defence of it, as long as could be consistent with the safety of the British army, or as to the belief that there existed a fair chance of success, provided the attack was deferred till after the British army was reinforced, and had recovered the effects of the sickness of the last campaign, and that time could be gained for the equipment and discipline of the Portuguese force.

It is certainly true that, in the House of Commons, the Portuguese subsidy was carried by a small and unwilling majority; and I believe that, if the House had been left to act upon their own feelings, they would in the month of February, when the subsidy was voted, have decided upon withdrawing the army from Portugal; but this is principally to be ascribed to the circumstance that all the officers in the army who were in England, whether they had served in Portugal or not, entertained and avowed the most desponding views as to the result of the war in that country. Not one officer, as far as I recollect, expressed, on the occasion, any confidence as to probable success; and not a mail arrived from Lisbon which did not bring letters at the time from officers of rank and situation in the army (many of which were communicated to me) avowing their opinions as to the probability, and even necessity, of a speedy evacuation of the country. It is true that some of the officers to whom I allude have since entirely changed their opinions, as I know from letters which I have recently received from them; and they may now, therefore, be very ready to shift their former opinions upon the members of the Government; but the truth is, the contest never could have been maintained in Portugal through the winter and spring, if it had not been for the determination of Government to persevere in it, at all risks to themselves, against not only the declared opinions of their opponents, but the public remonstrances of many of their friends.

Upon another part of your letter I am anxious to make an observation. I can assure you that you are very much mistaken if you suppose that the defensive system of warfare, which you have felt it necessary and expedient to adopt during the



present campaign, has lowered your reputation in this country. Upon this subject I can safely refer you to any friends or correspondents you may have in England, in whatever situation of life they may be, and I am sure you will find them all concur in stating that your military reputation never stood so high as it does at the present moment, and that even those whom you might suppose were least favorably inclined towards you are disposed now to do you the fullest justice.

You will find in the enclosed paper the answers to all your propositions in the order in which you brought them forward ; I trust that most of them will prove satisfactory to you.

When the reinforcements now destined for you shall have reached you, and the four regiments shall have arrived from Sicily, the British army in Portugal will have received an augmentation of nearly 14,000 rank and file ; and, allowing for a waste during the campaign of 4,000 men, the augmentation at the end of it would still amount to 10,000 men beyond the force originally destined for the defence of Portugal.

I should deceive you if I held out to you the expectation that either the military or financial resources of this country would enable the Government to keep up an army to this amount in Portugal for any considerable length of time, in addition to all the other necessary drains upon the service.

The recruiting does not, at this moment, cover in proportion the ordinary waste of an army at home, and, unless we receive larger supplies of money from South America than we have any reason to expect, Mr. Perceval is at a loss to know how we shall be able to find specie to meet such a great increase of expenditure.

The augmentation, therefore, of your force must be considered as made with reference to the present exigency ; and if the contest is to be maintained in Portugal and in the Peninsula upon the principle originally adopted, of its being a *long* contest, the British army must be reduced as soon as the present exigency will admit of it.

We are very anxious, therefore, not with a view of abandoning, but for the purpose of maintaining the contest in the Peninsula for an indefinite time, that, as soon as the present crisis shall appear to be over, you would send home the excess of your

force, after keeping 30,000 effective rank and file in Portugal and a sufficient garrison at Cadiz ; selecting, of course, these regiments to be returned home which are the least efficient, and consequently the least fitted for active service.

The question, in short, must come to this. We must make an option between a steady and continued exertion upon a moderate scale, and a great and extraordinary effort for a limited time, which neither our means, military or financial, will enable us to maintain permanently.

If it could be hoped that the latter would bring the contest to a speedy and successful conclusion, it would certainly be the wisest course ; but, unfortunately, the experience of the last fifteen years is not encouraging in this respect.

Ever most sincerely yours,

(Signed) LIVERPOOL.

To such an extent, indeed, did Lord Liverpool carry his resolution to place every conceivable resource at Wellington's disposal, that in October he even wrote him word that he had procured the sanction of the Admiralty to his borrowing "the lower-deck guns of the men-of-war in the Tagus, and availing himself of the assistance of a proportion of the seamen and marines of the fleet for the purpose of manning them," if he should think such a step desirable for the purpose of strengthening his lines of defence at Torres Vedras, of the construction and object of which the Government had been informed, though Masséna, whose projects and boasts they were intended to confound, had as yet no suspicion of their existence.

## CHAPTER X.

Illness of the King—Violence of the Opposition—Discussions on the Regency—Characteristics of Lord Liverpool's eloquence—Lord Holland's opposition—The Prince of Wales becomes Regent.

THE next letter which the general received from the minister is not without a melancholy interest. It was written to congratulate him on the result of the battle of Busaco, in which he had given Masséna an unmistakeable lesson that his retreat before the French legions was not forced upon him by the superior strategy of the marshal, renowned, intrepid, and skilful though he was, but was a part of his own long-premeditated plan of the campaign. For the victory of the British army was decisive; and the triple line of fortification which subsequently received our troops had occupied the whole summer in its construction. Richly merited, therefore, was the panegyric which Lord Liverpool was, as it were, the mouthpiece of the whole nation in pronouncing on the commander-in-chief. And, as the Portuguese divisions had highly distinguished themselves in the battle, he added that the King proposed to confer the Order of the Bath on General Beresford, the officer who had been entrusted with the duty of bringing them under the restraints and giving them the strength of discipline, and who had performed his task with the most conspicuous zeal and ability. Lord Liverpool added, "I can assure you that I never saw the King more entirely satisfied than he has been with the late operations of the army."

It was the last letter in which such language could ever be applied to George III. His favorite daughter, Princess Amelia, was lying on her deathbed, and he had more than once expressed his apprehension that his mind would not be equal to the shock that her death, which he knew to be inevitable, must cause him. When it took place he was hardly conscious of it. The date of the letter of which the sentence quoted above is an extract is the 17th of October. That day week the first signs of a relapse into his old disorder were perceptible. He grew rapidly worse; every hour confirmed the worst apprehensions that had been entertained; and before the 2d of November, the day on which his daughter breathed her last, he had sunk into a state of derangement which eventually proved permanent and incurable. It was not at first supposed to be of such a character. The completeness of his recovery from former attacks of the same kind naturally engendered a hope that this seizure would prove equally temporary. And the language which Lord Liverpool held to Wellington on the subject was, that "the reports of all the physicians who attend him are so far favorable, that they agree in giving the most confident expectations of his recovery. I trust this event will happen speedily, and before it can be necessary to take any steps for filling up the defect in the royal authority, for I am thoroughly convinced that, if a regency is once established, the King never will recover."

For his alienation of mind as yet was only partial, and not without intervals of consciousness. A Regency could not have been appointed without his being aware of it, and the feeling which he had displayed on that subject in 1788 could not fail to be present to the recollection of his ministers. He had then looked on all who had been desirous to hasten the appointment of a Regency almost in the light of his personal enemies, and had declared that if the bill had once passed, whatever might have been the state of his health afterwards, he would never have resumed

his authority. It was therefore a clear and positive duty of the ministers to postpone till the last moment a step which might have so prejudicial an effect. And at the beginning of December they still saw reason to hope that it might be unnecessary to have recourse to it, so decided, as Lord Liverpool wrote on the 4th, were "the reports of the physicians that the King had been getting gradually better for the last five days."

But the Opposition refused to take the chances of his recovery into their calculation. A subsequent paragraph of the same letter proceeds thus: "We had a most disagreeable scene in the two Houses of Parliament on Thursday last [November 29]. The feeling and temper of the country are, however, as good as possible, and our majorities were respectable. But the conduct of Lord Grenville on this occasion was beyond anything we could have conceived." While of the leaders of parties and sections of parties he says: "Canning was not in the House, and his friends did not vote; Lord Sidmouth and his friends zealous with us. Castlereagh likewise with us."

On the 1st of November the existing prorogation of Parliament had expired. As a matter of course it had been intended that it should be renewed; but since, from the King's illness, that had become impossible, the ministers, on its meeting, had instead moved an adjournment of both Houses; and on the 29th, feeling the importance of allowing no step to be precipitated which might damp the prospect of the King's restoration to health, Lord Liverpool proposed to repeat the adjournment for a fortnight longer. So harmless and ordinary a motion might have been expected to pass without comment. But the Opposition entertained no doubt that the appointment of a regent, who could be no one but the Prince of Wales, would be followed by their instant installation in office, and were not inclined to wait for so desired a consummation a single day. Lord Spencer was put forward with an amendment, which proposed "to examine his Majesty's physicians, and

to report the examination to the House without delay," and Lord Grenville supported him in an harangue of which scarcely any exercise of charity can account for its vehemence and exasperation. He exhausted the whole vocabulary of Parliamentary reproach in his denunciations of the idea of waiting a fortnight to see what turn his Majesty's disorder might take. If their Lordships should agree to such a motion, "they would be turning their backs upon the constitution and upon the country." It was "a proposition most derogatory to the dignity of Parliament, most hostile to the best interests of the monarchy, and most repugnant to every principle of the constitution." If, when the ministers proposed the previous adjournment, they had intended thus to repeat it, he would say that "they had not alone been guilty of disingenuousness, but had been implicated in a very criminal and treacherous proceeding." If he himself were to consent to the adjournment, it "would be a base and criminal dereliction of his duty." Lord Liverpool had founded his motion on a report made by the King's physicians to the Privy Council at an examination of those gentlemen. That this body should have been convened for the purpose of instituting an examination, "without the consent, the knowledge, and the summons of the King," was now denounced as an act "most hostile to the principles upon which the monarchy stands, and one which, though not republican, would lead to the establishment of the most odious and detestable form of aristocracy." Lord Liverpool had said "that there existed two grave reasons for the House concurring in his proposition: first, that there had taken place, since the commencement of the King's illness, a material amendment in his disorder; and secondly, that it had not been of long duration, as it had been when the Estates of the realm before proceeded to supply the deficiency of the kingly functions. Of these two facts, so confidently depended upon, he (Lord Grenville) denied that the House possessed any legal or constitutional knowledge."

It is evident that this argument rested on a strange misconception of the case, and of the ministers' proposal. If the Cabinet had been bringing in a bill proposing to enact a law, it would have been indispensable that every form should be strictly observed, and that Parliament itself should have examined the witnesses on whose evidence it was about to found its exercise of legislative power. But, as matters stood, where it was manifestly most desirable to postpone action which might prove to be premature; and, till the permanent nature of the King's malady should be clearly established, to avoid giving the case a publicity which might tend to increase the chance of its becoming permanent, Parliament might well be content to acquire its information, so long as it was certain, in an informal manner. That, as yet, the King's disease had not been of long duration was a matter of universal notoriety. It was not above five weeks since he had been mixing with his Court in perfect health. That it was now abating, if alleged by the physicians to the Privy Council, would certainly not be denied by them before the Parliamentary Committee. The factiousness and unreasonableness of the attack on the conduct of the ministers was accordingly condemned by a large majority of the House: the most remarkable circumstance in the division being that the princes of the royal family no longer acted as an united party; but, while the Dukes of York and Cambridge (the first-mentioned of whom was, of all the brothers, the most attached to the Prince of Wales) voted with the ministers, the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex joined the Whigs, with whom they now began to identify themselves.

The hopes, however, which the physicians had expressed of the King's speedy restoration to health grew fainter as December advanced. When, at the expiration of the fortnight, Parliament reassembled, Lord Liverpool himself moved the appointment of a Committee of the House to examine the physicians in attendance on his Majesty ;



and the Prime Minister made a similar motion in the House of Commons. The motions were agreed to as a matter of course; and on the report of the Committees it appeared that the physicians, five in number, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Heberden, Dr. Baillie, Sir H. Hallford, and Dr. Robert Willis, were unanimous in giving it as their opinion that, though a speedy recovery was less probable than it had seemed a few weeks before, the chances of the King's ultimate restoration to complete health were in no degree diminished. When pressed on the subject of his time of life, they were equally agreed that years had made an unusually slight impression on his constitution, that he was, as one expressed himself, younger and stronger at seventy-two, than many persons at sixty-two, and therefore that his age was not likely to present any great impediment to his cure. When similarly questioned as to his blindness, there was a similar harmony in their opinion that in the first stages of the complaint that deprivation was even an advantage, as removing the patient out of the reach of many circumstances which might cause agitation; though, as he progressed towards recovery it might be in some degree injurious, as rendering it more difficult to amuse his mind. Dr. Willis explained to the Committee that the malady was rather derangement (a term which of itself seems to indicate a temporary attack) than insanity, and Sir H. Hallford stated as one reason why he relied on the disease being eventually removed, "that his Majesty's faculties did not seem in any respect impaired by the continuance of his disease: so far from it, that his perception was clear and keen; his memory, which is the first faculty usually observed to be influenced and injured by this disease, and which is the first to feel the effects of age, was sound and strong. It was his judgment that was eclipsed."

Still as, though thus unanimous in believing in the probability of the King's ultimate recovery, the physicians equally agreed in apprehending that it could not be speedy.

the ministers decided that it was necessary to appoint a regency ; and in doing so they wisely and naturally took for the guide as to their own conduct the precedent afforded by the transactions of 1788. In some respects they were more fortunate than Pitt and his colleagues, in that the ground was partly cleared for them by the discussions which had taken place on that occasion. But the old question whether they should proceed by a legislative bill to confer the kingly authority on the Prince of Wales, or by an address to his Royal Highness, entreating him to take that authority upon himself, was as fiercely debated as ever. The objection which was urged with the greatest plausibility against proceeding by bill was the same which had been proposed by Fox before, that the royal assent, which by the constitution was indispensable to make any bill the law of the land, could not be given ; and that to affix the Great Seal to any such document without the express order of the sovereign was an act of treason. There was also the same personal motive existing now which had operated on the former occasion, and which, it is impossible to avoid suspecting, coloured to a certain extent the arguments and conduct of both parties ; that both took it for granted that the first act of the Prince of Wales as regent would be to change the Administration. Those, therefore, who expected that the first consequence of the establishment of the Regency would be an invitation to them to become the advisers of the Regent, were solicitous to ingratiate themselves with him by conferring the power on him in a manner which he was known to prefer. Those who considered him as incurably alienated from them, and who, from past experience, had reasonable doubts of both the political prudence and the filial duty which he was likely to exhibit, were desirous to fetter, for a time at least, his exercise of authority by some not very rigorous restrictions. And this motive had an inevitable weight in making the one party prefer the address, and the

other the bill. For if the Prince were of right and by his own act to assume the sovereign authority, he must of course assume it as free and unfettered as it had been exercised by his father. But, if his exercise of it depended on an enactment of Parliament, it was plain that they who conferred it must have a right to affix conditions and limitations to their gift. The truth was that neither method of procedure was free from objections, or reconcilable to the strict theory of the constitution. A regulation was certainly incomplete which was enacted by only two Estates of the realm, instead of three. To declare a measure so passed as valid a law as if the three had consented to it; to suppose the consent of the third when it was notorious that it neither had been nor could be given, was an ignoring of that third, or an usurping of its power, which was in direct antagonism to the most fundamental principles of the constitution. On the other hand, for the two Houses of Parliament to address the Prince of Wales to take on himself the supreme authority by his own act was not only a similar ignoring or usurping of the power of the third Estate, the sovereign, but it was also an invitation to an usurpation, which was a still greater violation of constitutional law: an invitation to the Prince to seat himself on the throne which his father had not yet vacated.

With such alternatives alone before them, the ministers were clearly justified in choosing that which had the greater argument in its favour to counterbalance the objections which they themselves could not deny. And therefore Lord Liverpool, in bringing forward the proposals on which the Government had decided, applied himself mainly to prove that, though the precedents on the subject were neither numerous nor very explicit, they all went to establish the right and power of Parliament to meet the difficulty by its own enactment, and certainly gave no countenance whatever to the suggestion that any one, even the acknowledged heir to the throne, had any

right to seize upon it till Parliament should have placed him there. On the 27th of December he brought forward three resolutions.

Firstly, that, by the King's indisposition, the personal exercise of the royal authority was suspended.

Secondly, that it was the right and duty of the Lords and Commons to provide the means of supplying this defect.

Thirdly, that for that purpose it was necessary that Lords and Commons should also determine on the means whereby the royal assent might be given in Parliament to such bill as might be passed by the two Houses of Parliament.

The first it was impossible that faction itself could deny. To establish the two last he applied all his fertility of argument, whether derived from facts or analogy ; all his knowledge of constitutional law, and of historical precedent. " Till he heard that it was intended to object to the resolutions which he had laid upon the table, he had thought that all would be agreed on the propriety of looking back to the precedent of 1788 as that which might be denominated a rule of conduct in respect of the form of their proceedings. The principle of that great and salutary precedent he considered analogous to, and clearly founded on, the genuine principles of the constitution. It was that the throne must be considered as always full, and that the political capacity of the sovereign is always in existence, whatever may be the immediate temporary incapacity or personal situation of the monarch. This was a practical distinction, of a nature not only expedient, but necessary to ensure the governed the continued existence of all the advantages to be derived from the principle and operations of an hereditary monarchy. The second principle, on which the proceedings of 1788 were founded, and which rendered them a proper precedent on the present occasion, was that the law knows no such office as that of regent. It is an office created under special circumstances, to meet a special exigency, which must always be grounded upon the necessity of the case itself, and ought not to be

extended beyond what the existing exigency may require. If this had not been the feeling of our ancestors, they would have made some general provision on the subject of regency; and had such an office as that of regent been recognised by laws we should have found something respecting it in the statute-book, and should long since have had it defined by the law of the land. But our ancestors evidently held that it was dangerous to meddle or interfere with so important a question by prospective provisions; and, whatever inconvenience might arise from any interval occurring in the personal exercise of the royal functions, they chose to rest upon the broad basis of the presumed general capacity of the king. In such a deficiency as the present they trusted entirely to the Parliament of the day to provide for the emergency, not by the adoption of any general measure, but by particular regulations founded on the special circumstances of the case, which might thereby furnish the strongest barrier when opposed to individuals aspiring to that office, and the strongest security to the Crown itself. He knew that some entertained an opinion that it might be wise to extend the principles and rules of the succession to the throne to the order and right of succession to the regency: that, however, had not been the principle of our ancestors, nor had it been an acknowledged principle in monarchical governments in other countries to which regulations similar to those of our own might have been applied. There was, indeed, hardly any country where that point had been so settled; nay, so far from it, the heir apparent or heir presumptive in most other countries is positively considered as the last person that should be appointed regent: as we knew that in countries where even the Salique law prevailed, the next successor to the throne had not been generally considered as entitled of right to take and exercise the powers of the regency. The third principle, on which the proceedings of 1788 were formed, and which formed the basis of the third resolution, was that it be-

longed to Parliament alone to appoint the regency. There had been no instance whatever in our history in which to make the appointment had not been recognised as the right and duty of the Parliament. And the very nature of the case limited the use of the term Parliament here to the Lords and Commons. Claims of right undoubtedly in some instances had been made by individuals aspiring to the office of regent, but those claims on full consideration had been uniformly rejected. In the reign of Henry VI, the monarch being a minor, a claim was made by the next of kin to exercise the royal authority during the minority : the claim was considered by Parliament, that is, by the Lords and Commons of Parliament, precedents were searched for, the authority of all the greatest men of the time was taken upon the subject, and the answer to that claim was that the Duke of Gloucester, the person asserting it, could have no such claim either by will or by kindred, but that the power of appointing a regent for the kingdom belonged solely to the estates of the realm. In short, he would venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, that no example whatever was to be found of any other mode of appointing a regent, except by the Estates of the realm in Parliament assembled. At the same time he might remind their Lordships that, on the present occasion, while claiming for the Estates of the realm the sole exclusive right to appoint the regent, he did not in any way mean to contend that the Prince of Wales ought not to be the person appointed. He had only said thus much on the question of the right of Parliament, because the claim of right on the part of the Prince had been explicitly preferred in 1788, though it had been subsequently abandoned.

“There was a fourth great constitutional principle on which the great precedent of 1788 was founded, worthy of particular attention : that, on a review of our whole history, there did not appear to be a single instance, with



the exception of the cases of the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., and of the Duke of Somerset in the reign of Edward VI., in which the authority of the regent, even though appointed by Parliament, had not been in some way or other also limited or restrained by Parliament. He was aware that it might be said that the examples referred to were mostly drawn from times of turbulence and violence. That could not be denied; but he must at the same time remind the House that to these times we are to look back for the establishment of the great and fundamental principles of the constitution; for the assertion of the rights and liberties of the people; for the foundation of those salutary laws which provide for the security of the lives and properties of the subject; and that we were consequently bound to regulate our conduct even by the precedents and authority of these remote times, if no later or better authority could be procured. The period between the establishment of the Great Charter and the accession of Henry VII. was that at which we were to look for the great foundation of our constitution. And there were many instances in the history of the Stuarts, who derived their right to the crown from the Tudors, where the greatest lawyers deduced those principles of liberty, on which the Revolution was afterwards founded, from the precedents established during that period. The great principles then laid down by Lord Coke, Selden, and other most eminent constitutional lawyers, rested practically on the precedents of that epoch; which, although a period of violence and civil commotions, was yet one to which Englishmen must look for the principles of their civil and political liberty.

“Moreover, these precedents had been confirmed in later times. In the twenty-fifth year of the last reign provision was made for a regency in the event of a prince who was a minor succeeding to the throne. At that time, in default of the issue of Frederick, the late Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland was presumptive heir to the throne,



a person at that time extremely popular in the country, and a favourite son of the reigning monarch; yet under all those circumstances Parliament gave the regency not to him, but to the Princess Dowager of Wales, subject to such limitations and restrictions as they in their wisdom thought proper to impose. It was clear therefore that those precedents, taken altogether, fully established the principle that the whole arrangement was, and had at all times been considered to be, wholly within the province of Parliament. The question now to be considered was in what way Parliament should proceed. The ministers recommended a bill, which, by virtue of the authority of the two Houses of Parliament, should receive the sanction royal by commission under the Great Seal, and thereby become an act of the whole Legislature. Others, it was equally well known, intended to propose proceeding by an address to the Prince of Wales, requesting him to take upon himself the government of the country, still under such restrictions and limitations as should seem meet to the Houses. I wish therefore," continued Lord Liverpool, "to call your Lordships' attention to the difference between the two modes of proceeding. It has been asserted that the two Houses cannot by any act of theirs appoint a regent, because they are incompetent, by themselves, to pass any law. But if this be so, if the two Houses cannot by any act of theirs legally appoint a regent, how can they appoint him by address any more than by bill? And again, whether they appoint him by address or by bill, will he not be equally appointed by Parliament; which, so long as it consists only of the two Houses of Lords and Commons, those who resist the mode of proceeding by bill deny to have any legal right to appoint him? The only difference would be that he would not be so formally appointed in one case as in the other. For my own part I have no hesitation in saying that I consider the mode of proceeding by bill not only the better mode, but the only mode that, upon any sound view of the principles of

the constitution, can be adopted. I conceive likewise that the mode of proceeding by address would not establish the authority of the Regent so firmly as that the courts of law would be controlled by it, because, if there were any flaw in its legislative sanction, they might think themselves not bound to take cognizance of his authority. An address, I admit, may call into activity legal powers already in existence, but cannot therefore be considered efficient to call forth or enact any powers not already existing; so that our proceedings in Parliament, if we should adopt the mode of proceeding by address, might be followed by a refusal on the part of the courts of law to act upon them. This, therefore, is a capital objection to the mode of proceeding by address; but it does not hold good with respect to the mode of proceeding by a bill to which the Great Seal shall have been affixed, for any bill to which the Great Seal has been once affixed has all the authority and power of law so long as it remains unrepealed. And this is equally the case if it has been affixed illegally; for that is a question into which the courts of law cannot inquire, but which can only be investigated by the Parliament."

Lord Stanhope interrupted the speaker to declare that this was a false view of the law; but he only led Lord Liverpool to prove his position on the spot, by a citation of the language held by Lord Camden in 1788, who then affirmed with respect to the Great Seal, that "Such was its efficacy and unquestionable authority that, even if the Lord Chancellor should put the Great Seal by caprice to any commission, it could not be afterwards questioned, not even by the judges themselves. If an Act of Parliament passed by authority of a commission issued under the Great Seal, and was endorsed with the words '*Le Roi le veut*,' it must be received as a part of the statute law of the land, and could not be disputed." And he further established his assertion by a reference to indisputable precedents drawn from the annals of Henry VI. and Edward VI., when unqualified

obedience had been rendered to different enactments after the royal assent had been formally signified to them, even though it was far from certain that that assent had been duly and legitimately obtained.

Lord Liverpool therefore concluded that, in case of the "personal incapacity of the King to signify his assent, there remained no other mode to provide for the deficiency but that of legislation. It lay only in the two remaining branches of Parliament to provide for the deficiency. For this there were numerous precedents. The principle of the present proceeding went throughout on the consideration that the throne was full; that the courts of justice were open; that the State was alive in all its parts. In 1688, much vaunted as a precedent for proceeding by address, the case was wholly different. The throne was vacant; the courts of justice were shut; the Great Seal was destroyed. Under these circumstances there was no alternative. Parliament then could have no authority to legislate, and of necessity adopted that mode under the circumstances which appeared to them most beneficial to the State. They adopted it because of the exigency of the case. He was ready to admit that, if the King were capable, the two Houses had no power to legislate without his authority; but, if he were incapable, they had no other means of legislating but by putting the Great Seal into activity. The common rule and constitutional principle was not to legislate partially if we could legislate generally. If there was a natural defect in one branch of the Legislature, then recourse must be had to that which is nearest the power of the whole in order to complete an act of authority by that which remains. We must either pursue that mode of legislating or do nothing at all. We must exert our legislative authority by the best means and forms which we have, and we shall then have the satisfaction of knowing that our act of authority cannot be disputed except by Parliament itself on reasonable grounds."

He concluded: "I wish that the question respecting these

resolutions now before you should rest on its own merits. They involve one of the greatest and most important questions ever discussed in Parliament ; they involve the most essential rights of the Legislature ; they involve the most essential interests of the throne : and in these considerations they involve everything most dear to the liberties of the subject, most important to the preservation of the constitution. Their adoption will afford the best security for the welfare and prosperity of the country, and hold out the most effectual protection for the rights and interests of all classes of the community. For it cannot but be inconsistent with the genuine principles of the constitution and monarchy of the country, that any individual, however exalted in rank or station, should be invested with the powers of sovereignty without the constitutional sanction and control of Parliament."

Unusually copious extracts have been given from Lord Liverpool's speech on this occasion, partly on account of the great constitutional importance of the subject, and because the mode of procedure then adopted will probably be taken at any future time as affording an irresistible precedent ; partly, perhaps still more, because they afford as good a specimen as can be desired of Lord Liverpool's style of oratory. It may not soar to the highest flights of eloquence ; it does not seek to illustrate the topics with which it deals by any rich or varied imagery (they hardly admitted of impassioned appeals to the feelings) ; and from sarcasm he at all times carefully abstained. But nevertheless the speech, in its unabridged completeness, is not without high merit. It exhausts the question ; it displays a thorough and minute knowledge of the whole history of the subject, an entire mastery of the fundamental principles and of the practical working of the constitution. It marshals facts and precedents with admirable clearness both of arrangement and explanation. It shirks no point which could be raised by the opposite party ; it avoids the fatal but common error of weakening a single argument or

statement by exaggeration. Such a style of oratory, if, as has been admitted, not of the highest possible class, is nevertheless well suited to the character of the speaker as a minister entrusted with the conduct of weighty and delicate State affairs, well adapted to its object of convincing the reason of Parliament, and of justifying the proceedings of the Government to the nation at large.

The speech was completely successful. Lord Grenville, who had held an inferior office in Pitt's Ministry in 1788, felt himself precluded by his position then from now opposing a measure which marched exactly in the steps of that proposed by his chief on that occasion, though he indemnified himself for the forbearance of his vote by a virulence of invective (if indeed his language deserves so respectable a name) against the ministers personally surpassing all former explosions of his ill-temper. The sole cause of his indignation, as he himself avowed, was that they had allowed two months to elapse before they had taken any steps to fill up the void left in the Government by the King's illness. He declared that their conduct in so doing "was putting to hazard the best interests of the country, and might entail calamity, not alone upon this nation, but upon the whole human race. Supporting, as he meant to do, their proposition, he must still reprobate and condemn the accumulated criminality of ministers: he must exclaim with all his might against the usurpation of those arrogant men, who first, since the days of Cromwell, had the audacity to assume and to exercise the functions of the regal authority. Their conduct could only be considered as an outrageous insult upon the nation, and a barefaced usurpation of the sovereign's power, by forging his royal mandate and issuing orders in the King's name, when it was admitted that his Majesty's pleasure could not possibly have been taken upon any public measure."

Such frantic vehemence defeated itself. Considering that twice within the recollection of most of his hearers the King had been attacked by a malady of the same kind, and had



completely recovered, it was not likely that they could be induced to think eight weeks too long a period to wait in the hope of indications of a similar recovery; while it was obvious that, unless the whole Government were brought to a standstill during the incapacity of the King, the ministers must take upon themselves to carry it on as if they were able to consult him.

The task of formally opposing the resolutions therefore was left to Lord Holland. He could not deny the soundness of Lord Liverpool's principal positions, acknowledging even what in 1788 his uncle had so strenuously denied, that Parliament had the undoubted right, in appointing a regency, of "passing by even the heir apparent or presumptive of the throne." But he denied that "any agreement of the two Houses could make an Act of Parliament," and characterised any attempt to impose temporary limitations on the prerogative proposed to be entrusted to the Regent as "a direct and studied insult to him." He went further, and formally denied the power of the two Houses so to limit the royal authority even when vested in the hands of a deputy, on the ground that "as it had been conferred on the King for the security of the people, as, unless it were necessary to their interests and conducive to their safety, it ought not to exist at all, no power but that of a *full* Parliament was competent to wrest it from them." He contended that the Long Parliament itself, an assembly certainly not inclined to put the authority of the King too high, had asserted in the plainest manner that "there was no instance of Parliament sitting without its full powers, and that every Act was incomplete without the concurrence of the three branches of the Legislature. Even in that moment of popular agitation, the great men who were the leaders of the Parliament at that time, and who were some of the first lawyers and patriots in our history, were so careful not to exceed the bounds of their Parliamentary duties that it was not until the Parliament had agreed to the abolition of monarchy itself that they proceeded to acts of legisla-

tion." If, in his statement that to impose temporary restrictions on the full exercise of the royal authority was a direct and studied insult to the prince who was to be appointed regent, he fell in a minor degree into the same fault of exaggeration that marked Lord Grenville's harangue, in this latter argument he was presuming largely on the probability of the party feelings of a portion of his audience leading them to overlook both logic and fact, since nothing could be plainer or more notorious than that, if the concurrence of the three Estates was necessary to constitute an Act of Parliament, the Long Parliament had not abolished monarchy, since undoubtedly Charles had assented to no such abolition.

Finally, Lord Holland was compelled to admit that "the nature of the emergency was such that no course of proceeding, neither that by bill nor that by address, was entirely unobjectionable," and to rest his preference for the address as more respectful and more agreeable to the inclinations of the prince who was to become regent.

Two of the royal princes declared their adherence to the amendment which Lord Holland concluded by moving: the Duke of Sussex following Lord Grenville in his vehement denunciations of the whole Cabinet for having "assumed for the immense period of eight weeks the functions of royalty," and showing his animosity to them personally still more by the care with which he repeatedly styled them "the late ministers of his Majesty;" while the Duke of York, though he approved of their having waited till the present time, and declared that he would willingly have voted for even a further adjournment, equally objected to the method of proceeding by bill, and to the imposition of any limitations on the Regent's power. There could be no doubt that he was speaking the sentiments of the Prince of Wales himself; and, if they had considered their own prospect of retaining office, it would have been the interest of the ministers to have yielded at least the last point, which was probably the one



to which their future master attached the greater importance. But, considering nothing but the principles of the constitution, as they interpreted it, and the interests of the country, as they regarded them, they were firm in their adherence to their original view: and their uncompromising steadiness had a reward which they had never anticipated, and which came upon their opponents like a thunder-clap.

On a division the resolutions of the Government were carried in the House of Lords by a majority of 26, in the House of Commons by more than 100. A deputation of both Houses was appointed to wait upon the Prince of Wales, and to express their hope that, "from his regard for the interests of his Majesty and the nation, he would be ready to undertake the weighty and important trust proposed to be invested in him." And he returned a short and dignified reply, intimating, indeed, some annoyance at the limitations imposed on the Regent's authority by the assurance that his own feelings would have prompted him "to show his father and sovereign all the reverential delicacy inculcated in the resolutions," but consenting to undertake the regency, "relying with confidence on the constitutional advice of an enlightened Parliament, and the zealous support of a generous and loyal people. He would use all the means left to him to merit both."

The bill necessary to give the resolutions formal legislative validity was passed through both Houses with all practicable rapidity. The charge and care of the King's person, and the control of the royal household, were vested in the Queen; and the Opposition, flattering themselves that the distribution of all other appointments would belong to them, caused a little delay by their efforts to remove one or two offices which had hitherto always been ranked as belonging to the household, such as those of the Lord Steward and the Master of the Hounds, from that classification. On this topic it was remarkable that they were joined by Canning, as they had been on the question

of imposing limitations on the Regent's power ; but, though in one or two divisions the majority obtained by the ministers was very narrow, the bill was ultimately passed by both Houses as they framed it, with a provision that the limitations on the Regent's authority should cease at the end of twelve months, since, if the King had not recovered his health by that time, but little hope could be entertained of his ever becoming able to resume his position as the active ruler of the kingdom. It is remarkable that so great were the fluctuations of the disease in its earlier stages, that as late as the 28th of January the Lord Chancellor stated to the Lords that there was "a most material amendment in his Majesty." But the hopes engendered by this statement, and by the opinions of the physicians on which it was formed, proved delusive. The two Houses further agreed to a resolution authorising the issue of a Commission to give it the sanction of the royal assent in the King's name, "forasmuch as" (in the words of the Letters Patent) "for divers causes and reasons we cannot conveniently at this time be present in our royal person in the higher House of Parliament." The assent was thus given on the 5th of February ; on the 6th the necessary oaths were administered to the Prince at the Privy Council, and the Regency was formally established.

## CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Perceval continues minister—Increased strength of the Ministry—Expectations of the Spaniards—New measures respecting the militia—A Committee of the House of Commons recommends a return to cash payments—Lord Liverpool predicts a war between Russia and France—Birth of the King of Rome—Operations in Sicily and in India—Debate on the Catholic question—Resignation of Lord Wellesley—Expiration of restrictions on the Regency—Lord Castlereagh becomes Foreign Secretary—The Regent's cordiality towards the ministers—He makes overtures to Lord Grenville and Lord Grey to join the Cabinet—The Catholic question—Lord Liverpool's predictions of some of the results of emancipation verified in 1868—Murder of Mr. Perceval—Negotiations for fresh ministerial arrangements—Mr. Stuart Wortley's address to the Regent for a strong Ministry—Discussions in Parliament on the negotiations—Lord Wellesley's proposals to Lord Grenville—Negotiations with Lord Moira—The old Administration is replaced under Lord Liverpool.

THE leaders of the Opposition, who in some of their recent votes had been avowedly guided by the inclinations of the Regent himself, had never doubted that his first act would be to deprive the existing ministers of their offices and to entrust the government to them. They found themselves signally deceived. The day before the bill passed the Prince had written to Mr. Perceval<sup>1</sup> to communicate his intention to keep him and his colleagues in his service. The chief reason alleged for this decision was his Royal Highness's desire to do nothing which "might in the

<sup>1</sup> The letter is given at full length, with Mr. Perceval's reply, in Lord Colchester's Diary, ii. 316, 317. The date of the letter is February 4th, that of the minister's reply February 5th, the day on which the bill passed.

smallest degree have the effect of interfering with the progress of his sovereign's recovery." But another reason, which probably was not without its weight, might perhaps have been found in the dictatorial manner which the two lords, as they were often called, Grenville and Grey, had already adopted towards him. They had evidently considered him bound implicitly to adopt their counsels. He, on the other hand, had shown at least an equal inclination to consult Lord Moira, and in passages of difficulty a still greater disposition to be guided by the judgment of Sheridan, by far the ablest man of the Whig party since the death of Fox, and also the most intimate of his personal friends. It must be added that he had a fair reason for not considering himself bound, on the score of consistency, to discard his father's Tory councillors for his own former friends of the opposite party, since, on the death of Fox, he had made known to the surviving leaders of the Whigs his intention of withdrawing from all personal interference in politics, and had expressed himself desirous of being no longer considered as "a party man."<sup>1</sup>

Sheridan's advice, if, as is most probable, it contributed to decide the Prince to retain the services of Perceval and his colleagues, was certainly most disinterested, since it deprived him of an appointment which it was of great consequence to him to obtain. If a Whig Cabinet had been formed, he was to have been Chief Secretary for Ireland, and to counsel a step so destructive of his personal prospects was a rare act of political good faith. But he seems fully entitled to the praise. It is certain that the letter which announced that decision to the Prime Minister was of his framing, and that the Prince himself saw gradually more and more reason to be satisfied with the decision to which he had come. In truth, the reason put forward, that any change of the Administration at that moment might have a prejudicial effect on the King's health by retarding his recovery, expressed his genuine

<sup>1</sup> Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ii. 384.

feelings: for just at this moment the bulletins of the King's health were growing more and more favorable; and on the very day that the Regency Bill passed George III. spoke of it to Lord Eldon<sup>1</sup> with a calmness and good judgment well calculated to encourage sanguine hopes that his recovery could not be far distant.

The ministers themselves felt their position greatly strengthened by the circumstances under which they were thus continued in office. Even while the Regency Bill was in preparation, and when they fully expected to be dismissed in a few weeks, Lord Liverpool could write to one of his correspondents that, though the Opposition were "more bitter than ever, they were certainly very much divided amongst themselves; and he was confident that the Government had a considerable majority of the well-disposed and respectable part of the community on their side." And if this calculation was correct when, according to the general belief, the Opposition leaders were enjoying the full confidence of the Prince of Wales, it was evident that the entire change of circumstances, which had rendered the Prince with his increased authority the open patron of the Ministry, had placed them wholly above danger. And during the year 1811 they were consequently able to follow out their own policy without hindrance or obstacle, some of the Opposition themselves being even gradually won over to a change of their opinions on points connected with the Peninsular war, by the proofs which our great general was daily giving of his manifest superiority to all his antagonists. Even before the end of February the accession of strength which the ministers derived from these occurrences began to be felt, and Lord Liverpool could

<sup>1</sup> He said, "I don't think it a very pleasant thing to be put out of office any more than any of you may do. But my ministers tell me that my physicians think it best that the weight of business should be taken off my hands, and my physicians tell me that my ministers think so; and as I have a perfect confidence in you all, that you will do what is best for me, I shall very readily acquiesce." (*Diary of Lord Colchester*, ii. 319.)

write to Lord Wellington that "everything was going on more smoothly than could have been expected, and hitherto as well as could even have been desired. The King," he added, "was certainly recovering."

Lord Liverpool's own resolution to consider everything, and even the civil rights of the soldiers themselves, secondary to the great object of strengthening Wellington's hands, was remarkably shown in one piece of advice which he gave him about the same time. The general complained, not without reason, that the enemy whom he was combating was greatly assisted by our own newspapers, which continually published accurate and minute details of the amount and distribution of his forces, and in some instances even of the designs which he had, or was supposed to have, in contemplation. A careful inquiry satisfied Lord Liverpool that this information was procured from no subordinate official of the Government, but from officers themselves, or from their friends at home, who communicated to the papers the letters which they had received. "Indeed a mail never arrived without his seeing in the next newspapers copies of such letters, which bore internal marks of their authenticity." And he therefore recommended Wellington to try the effect of a general order pointing out the difficulties to himself and the dangers to the country which such communications caused, and requiring the officers to take care that their letters were not thus divulged in future. And he recommended him, if this warning should be disregarded, or should prove ineffectual, to stop the post altogether. He mentioned, what Wellington apparently was not aware of, that Sir John Moore had taken this step during his campaign, and urged him in the strongest manner to follow that officer's example if the evil were not stopped. He "knew very well that such a measure could not be continued for any length of time;" but even a short experience of its inconvenience would, he had no doubt, make the officers with the army and their friends at home cautious for the future.



Wellington would have even wished to have the details of his own formal despatches kept out of the *Gazette*. But that, as Lord Liverpool explained to him, was a matter of greater difficulty. "He had," he said, "used every caution in his power on this subject, and had almost invariably confined the publication of the despatches to statements of facts, without observation or prediction as to the future. But Wellington himself must be aware of the very difficult situation in which ministers were placed from the nature of our government. The public expected information from them, and a most unfavorable impression was sometimes produced by their remaining wholly silent." He therefore asked Wellington, if possible, to write two despatches, one of which should be "confined to what he might think could safely be published, while the other might convey that information and those observations which ought to be brought under the view of his Majesty and his Government, but ought at the same time to be confined to them exclusively. Or, if he should be unable to spare time for this work, if he would mark in his despatches what he might be willing to have published, he himself would take care that the publication should be limited to those passages." But, he added, it would be necessary for the general to take the same precaution with respect to the Portuguese Government, since "he had found passages published in the Portuguese gazettes from Wellington's despatches to the authorities at Lisbon in every respect similar to those which he had himself received from him, but which he had thought it prudent to omit. And this had given the appearance of a desire on the part of the ministers to conceal what there was no objection to publish in Portugal, and had produced an unfavorable impression." It required all the care and energy of both minister and general to abate the evil of which both were conscious, and which the impossibility of fettering our press prevented from being entirely removed.

Nor indeed, in spite of their increased strength both in



Parliament and with the nation at large, were the ministers yet free from the difficulties which had hitherto embarrassed them in their efforts to provide the supplies and reinforcements necessary to maintain the army in a state of complete efficiency. Money was still scarce to a degree which at the present day we find difficult to comprehend ; and our population, far smaller then than that which we see around us now, seemed scarcely equal to the drain made upon it by the demands of the two services in so protracted a war. The extent of the difficulty caused by these deficiencies is shown by the following letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Wellington on the subject of the project which it was understood that the Spanish Government entertained, of offering the British leader the command of their army as well as of our own :

*Private.*

Downing Street, 20th February, 1811.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have received the favour of your Lordship's letter relative to the proposal which is likely to be made to you by the Spanish Government, to confer on you the command of the Spanish armies.

Before I return an answer to your letter in this respect, I think it may be material to take this opportunity of communicating to you the sentiments of Government with regard to our situation in the Peninsula.

You will recollect that, at the commencement of the last campaign, we calculated the expense of the exertion to be made in Portugal as not exceeding in the whole three millions for that year ; and we were of opinion that, if the expense could be confined within this limit, the exertion might be maintained, perhaps, for an indefinite period.

The events of the campaign have led to a gradual augmentation of our army, and to an increase of expenditure in all the different branches of the service. These efforts have been certainly made in the hope that it would not be necessary to continue our exertions upon the present scale for any considerable length of time.

I may refer you on this point to my private letter of the 10th of September, in which I inform you that the augmentation which it was then agreed should be made to your force would be made only with reference to a temporary exigency. I add, "We must make an option between a steady and continued exertion upon a moderate scale and a great and extraordinary effort for a limited time, which neither our means military nor financial will enable us to maintain permanently."

Upon comparing the expenditure of the last year with our original intention, and with the expenditure of former years, the result is as follows :—

The campaign of 1808 may be considered as having cost 2,778,796*l.* ; the campaign of 1809, 2,639,764*l.* ; the campaign of 1810, 6,061,235*l.* This expense is exclusive of ordnance stores, supplies of every sort which have been sent in kind, and of transports, making in the whole not less than 2,000,000*l.* more. It is further to be observed, that this amount furnishes no ground for calculating our probable expenditure, according to our present effort, for the year 1811 ; as the first considerable augmentation of our army in Portugal only took place in the month of September, and as a reinforcement of 5,000 men has been recently sent from this country. We have therefore to calculate for the current year, not only upon whatever increase may be necessary for the Portuguese subsidy, but likewise upon the expense of an army of 50,000 British from the beginning of the year.

I am fully convinced that every effort has been made to carry on the service with as much economy as possible ; but I am under the necessity of stating it to be the unanimous opinion of every member of the Government, and of every person acquainted with the finances and resources of the country, that it is absolutely impossible to continue our exertions upon the present scale in the Peninsula for any considerable length of time.

If the present amount and condition of our army is likely to enable us to bring the contest in Portugal to a short and successful issue, we must meet the difficulties, whatever they may be ; but we must otherwise look, at no very distant period, either to a reduction of the scale of our exertions, or to the necessity of withdrawing our army altogether.

The honour of this country, as well as its safety, is however so deeply committed in the contest, and the obligations we have contracted with the Portuguese army and nation are of such a nature, that we are fully sensible that every effort is to be made by us to preserve our station in Portugal as long as possible. But these considerations furnish an additional inducement why we should not involve ourselves, under circumstances such as those which I have been obliged to describe, in any further engagements which we may be wholly unable to fulfil, or which can only be fulfilled by diminishing our exertions in the quarter to which they are now directed.

It is impossible for us therefore to hold out any prospect to the Spanish Government of our being able to assist them materially, under the present circumstances, with the means of supplying and equipping their armies. If the case was a new one, we might give the nations of the Peninsula the option between considerable military aid or a subsidy to a large amount ; or a middle course might be adopted, and the military aid and subsidy both be afforded to a limited extent. But the resources of this country do not enable us to afford, at the same time (in addition to all the other great and unavoidable demands of the war), such a military effort as we are at present making in Portugal and at Cadiz and large pecuniary supplies to the Spaniards. We are at this time maintaining a British and Portuguese force in the Peninsula of not much less than 90,000 men ; we are keeping in check the most efficient and most numerous armies of France in that quarter ; we are affording thereby to the cause of Spain, as well as Portugal, the most effectual assistance possible : and if the Spaniards cannot avail themselves of such a diversion, it is difficult to say what effort of their allies is likely to accomplish their deliverance.

After having brought these considerations under your view, it appears scarcely necessary to add that, under the present circumstances, we see no adequate advantage that would result from the command of the Spanish armies being conferred upon you. At the same time, if any arrangement could be made which, without involving the country in further expense, or engaging the British army in operations in the interior of Spain, would place at your disposal the Spanish armies which may be

in the provinces immediately contiguous to Portugal, and would enable you to combine their operations with those of the army under your command, considerable advantage might certainly arise from such an arrangement; and you will exercise therefore your discretion with regard to any such qualified proposal, if it should be made to you on the part of the Spanish Government.

I have the honour to be,

My dear Lord,

Very faithfully yours,

LIVERPOOL.

Lord Liverpool clearly thought that one great inducement to the Spaniards to entertain a design so inconsistent with the usual arrogance of their nation was the idea that it would induce us to be still more lavish than heretofore of our resources in their behalf. And this was actually beyond our power. In fact, the very depth and firmness of our resolution to maintain the contest to the last did of itself imperatively warn us to husband our means, which this year were also in some degree crippled by an unusually bad harvest, a calamity that extended over all the countries of Northern Europe. The exertions which the letter just quoted recapitulates were far beyond any estimate that could previously have been formed of our power; and though, as the struggle continued, habit enabled us to support still heavier burdens, it was no wonder that as yet what was already being done appeared even to the most earnest the utmost that by any possibility could be contrived.

To meet one of the difficulties Lord Liverpool proposed to his colleagues a measure for recruiting the regular army by a systematic draught from the militia; and a further proposal for the interchange of the British and Irish militia, by which the transfer of the regiments of one island to service in the other should be legalized. Both measures received the sanction of Parliament; and it is deserving of remark that, in recommending the second bill to his brother peers, Lord Liverpool took the opportunity of bearing a warm

testimony to the general good conduct of the Irish Roman Catholics : saying that "he believed them to be as respectable and loyal as any other description of his Majesty's subjects, and that the regiments raised in counties chiefly Catholic would be among the first to volunteer to serve in England." Such language showed a complete freedom from the bigotry which influenced many of those who followed him in his resistance to Catholic emancipation ; but at the same time it gave up the ground on which the Roman Catholics had originally been debarred the full exercise of their civil rights, and which had been their loyalty to the exiled dynasty instead of to the reigning sovereign, and the incompatibility of their avowed allegiance to the Pope with their fidelity to a Protestant, or indeed to any temporal prince. The bills thus passed outran even the hopes of those who framed them in the success which resulted from them ; and, during the remainder of the war, the militia proved a very effective and abundant nursery for the army employed abroad.<sup>1</sup> But the want of specie was a difficulty not so easily overcome. At the time of which we are speaking it influenced all our transactions at home, however petty or important. Lord Folkestone affirmed to the House of Commons that a farmer going to a fair, though there was a bank in the town where it was held, found himself utterly unable to procure silver for a single pound note. Those who had come to sell were unable to find purchasers, from the absolute dearth of small change, except in cases where four or five persons clubbed together to make purchases which, taken together, should amount to a pound. The Bank itself passed a resolution declaring that a crown-piece was worth five-and-sixpence ; while men were prosecuted for selling guineas for a sum beyond

<sup>1</sup> Before the summer was over, Lord Liverpool wrote to Wellington : "I am happy in being able to add that our measure for recruiting by volunteers from the militia has been in this country more successful than we had any reason to expect. And we gain this peculiar advantage from it, that every man who is approved is a formed soldier, and not a raw recruit."

their nominal value ; an inconsistent piece of severity and injustice, when the committee appointed by the House of Commons reported that gold had risen more than fifteen per cent. above its usual price. Various remedies were proposed, one of which, though urged by a committee of the House of Commons, was, in the opinion of the Government, calculated rather to aggravate than to diminish the evil. It recommended a repeal of the law which suspended cash payments at a fixed period, whether the war should have been previously terminated or not. And it is probable that this recommendation, which it was manifest might involve, and, as the event proved, would inevitably have involved, a paralysing of our military operations at a most critical period, disposed Mr. Vansittart and Lord Liverpool, who at all times enjoyed, both among his brother ministers and brother peers, a high reputation for his acquaintance with financial affairs, to resist the adoption of the committee's report. Under their advice the Government came to the aid of the commercial classes by a great advance of exchequer bills, and thus enabled them to save their credit as a body, and preserved numbers of them from ruin, and the country in general from a monetary panic which might have been most mischievous to all. It was a wise and salutary measure, and was soon acknowledged to be so. Nor perhaps was it an inferior proof of statesmanlike wisdom to acknowledge the impotence of legislation in other cases, and to admit that no legislative measure could supply the deficiency of the precious metals. None was attempted, and the evil, left to itself, gradually, to some extent, cured itself. Under the judicious care of the Government, equally sagacious in its partial action and its partial inaction, British trade recovered its balance, and coin began to flow more freely into the Exchequer to be transmitted to our troops and allies in the Peninsula.

The campaign of 1811 was, however, distinguished by no great exploits ; though marked by the steady progress of the British arms, and by conflicts which placed in a

stronger light than ever the superiority of the British troops to their enemies. But neither Barrosa nor Albuera were productive of any more positive consequences; and the operations of the whole year must be looked on rather as a preparation for and augury of the brilliant and decisive achievements of the two ensuing campaigns, than as deserving of any detailed mention from their own importance. An omen of the future, indeed, even before Barrosa and Albuera, was drawn from the occupation and maintenance of the lines of Torres Vedras by no inconsiderable part of the Opposition itself. And it was on the occasion of Lord Liverpool inviting the House to thank Wellington for his successful defence of Portugal by those operations, that Lord Grey, (as has been previously mentioned,) did himself honour by frankly admitting the injustice which he had previously done the general and the ministers. Lord Liverpool, in a speech of very elaborate details, after giving a minute description of the greatness of the preparations which Napoleon had made to ensure the success of his armies, and of the means and acts by which Wellington had baffled the utmost endeavours of the French marshals, claimed for him the praise of having shown himself superior in every quality of a commander to Junot, Soult, Victor, Jourdan, Massena, "generals whose career of success had made their names proverbial." And Lord Grey, who the year before had inveighed so bitterly against the Government, the general, and every one connected with the war, now put himself forward to second the motion, and, with a candour which is the more honorable from its rarity, acknowledged how completely his former anticipations had been falsified; and, while "he trusted their Lordships would do him the justice to believe that the opinions which he had formerly delivered, though now happily contradicted by the event, were at least the sincere and honest dictates of his mind, taken up from no illiberal or invidious feelings," avowed that "he had now no hesitation to qualify and retract them."



For the object of the present work it is not out of place to add that in some previous sentences he had also expressed his admiration of Lord Liverpool's speech, "to which he had listened with the sincerest pleasure; and his thanks were particularly due to him for the candour which he had displayed on this, as on every similar occasion, in avoiding the introduction of any invidious topics, and omitting all allusion to any of those former differences of opinion which might have tended to interrupt the unanimity which ought to prevail on such an occasion." For one of the most uniform characteristics of Lord Liverpool's oratory was its extreme forbearance and fairness towards his adversaries; and the moderation of temper which this habit indicated, combined as it was with an unshrinking assertion of and adherence to his own convictions, eminently qualified him for the higher post to which he was soon to be called, and even in times of the greatest party violence, from which his Administration was not free, allayed the irritation and tempered the opposition of all but the most rancorous and the most unscrupulous.<sup>1</sup>

The qualities of the existing Prime Minister closely resembled his own, and on his own scene of action were

<sup>1</sup> Alison (c. lxx. § 116) quotes from Berthier's letters to Massena, dated March 1811, the following astonishing statement: "L'empereur lit les journaux de Londres, et chaque jour un grand nombre de lettres de l'Opposition, dont quelques-unes accusent Lord Wellington, et parlent en détail de vos opérations; l'Angleterre tremble pour son armée d'Espagne." But it seems due to the character of our Parliament, little trammelled as some members had shown themselves by the ordinary rules of candour or patriotism, to avow a total disbelief that any of them had been guilty of the treasonable wickedness of furnishing information to the enemy. If Napoleon did really receive letters from England (a fact which may be doubted, so little is the credence due to the assertion of any Frenchman of that day, and especially to his own), they probably came from some of the members of the different revolutionary societies which were still in existence; from men trying to represent themselves as persons of importance, rather than from any who actually were such.

equally effective. In the same month which had witnessed Lord Grey's retractation Lord Liverpool writes to Wellington: "We are proceeding with our business in Parliament very prosperously. The good news you have sent us has greatly assisted us. Perceval's character is completely established in the House of Commons; he has acquired an authority there beyond any minister within my recollection except Mr. Pitt. Our weak side," he is forced to add, "is Ireland: and so it will remain for many years." This prediction, which his own unfortunate steadfastness on the question of Catholic emancipation contributed to verify, was not the only one in this letter. With a sagacity which no one else seems as yet to have shared, he announced to Wellington that he certainly saw "appearances of a renewed conflict in the north of Europe; and it would be a great question to determine what advantage could be taken of it, if it should occur."

It denoted a singularly keen foresight thus to anticipate the renewal of resistance by the Powers of the north of Europe to the will of the French emperor. It is true that Russia had recently relaxed some of her commercial decrees in a manner with which he was dissatisfied; but she appeared to be so fully occupied with her war against Turkey, that it was hardly to be expected that, while that continued, she would bring on herself a fresh antagonist, and that one so formidable as she had already found the conqueror of Friedland: while, of the other great kingdoms, Prussia had concluded a fresh treaty with Napoleon in January, and his alliance with Austria seemed more firmly cemented than ever by the birth of a son, which Maria Louisa had borne him only three weeks before this letter was written. But a true statesman can often pierce through the outer screen of present acts and occurrences; carefully scrutinizing the real interests and genuine though perhaps secret feelings of other nations and other statesmen, he learns to dis-

tinguish transitory entanglements from permanent connexions, and thus is able at times to foresee the degree in which, in spite of existing circumstances, or even, it may be, in consequence of those very circumstances, the more enduring interests and feelings may eventually work a change in the policy of present allies or present enemies. And thus it happened in this instance. Fourteen months afterwards the prediction which Lord Liverpool thus announced was fulfilled; and the total failure of Napoleon's plans, and the ruin of his army in Russia, was owing in no slight measure to the firmness with which he, who had then become Prime Minister, adhered to the resolution which the same letter also repeated, that, whatever might happen elsewhere, "the Government was determined not to be diverted from the Peninsula to other objects: if we could strike a blow, it was there that we would strike it." And the influence which this determination had on the campaign at the most distant extremity of Europe was demonstrated by the singular coincidence that, on the very morning that the French and Russian hosts were arming for the deadly struggle at Borodino, the one was cheered and the other dismayed by the news of the great victory which Wellington had achieved at Salamanca.

With all his conviction that the Peninsula was the field of action to which, so far we were concerned, every other was subordinate, Lord Liverpool was not allowed to fix his undivided attention on it. He was forced also to take measures to secure the safety of Sicily, which it was understood that Murat was preparing to attack, and to enter into a correspondence with the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, with respect to attacks which he had planned and the navy had executed against the important islands of Bourbon and the Mauritius, and the still more valuable Dutch settlement of Java. They were all, as the reader need hardly be reminded, entirely successful; and Lord Liverpool, generously giving the whole credit of the con-

quests thus achieved to Lord Minto, announced to him that, as soon as the restrictions on the Regent's authority should have expired, the Prince intended to promote him in the peerage. Though it was with great unwillingness that his Royal Highness had consented to any limitations being placed on his authority, yet, after they were so imposed, he acquiesced in them with the most entire cheerfulness and good faith ; abstaining even from conferring honours which were confessedly within his authority to grant,<sup>1</sup> lest his bestowing them might seem a proof of his discontent with those who had forbidden him to grant more, and of whom his acquaintance with them as ministers had led him to form a very different opinion from that which he had formerly entertained.<sup>2</sup>

The first year of the regency had thus passed by with a great increase of credit and authority to the Ministry, which was of the greater importance because the hopes of the King's recovery, which up to midsummer had been entertained with sanguine confidence by all his physicians, during the autumn and winter had gradually faded away, and at the beginning of 1812 few persons, if any, ventured to whisper a belief in the possibility of his restoration to health. In February, if he were still in the same state, all restrictions on the full exercise of his authority by the Regent were to cease ; and the leaders of the Opposition

<sup>1</sup> After General Hill's splendid surprise of Gerard at Arroyo de Molinos, Lord Liverpool wrote to Wellington that Hill was to have the red riband of the Bath "as soon as the restrictions on the regency had expired ;" adding, "You are of course aware that there is no restriction upon the regent's right of granting this species of honor. But his Royal Highness has thought proper to restrain himself as to the grant of every description of honour until the period when Parliament shall have declared, from the little probability of the King's recovery, that the Executive Government should be administered by the regent as fully and unrestrainedly as by the King himself."

<sup>2</sup> In a letter quoted by Mr. Twiss (*Life of Lord Eldon*, ii. 196), the chancellor tells one of his intimate friends that "Before the close of it [the year of restricted regency] the prince had totally altered his opinion of the men whom he had hated."

still cherished a hope that, when that moment should arrive, the Prince would think that the reasons which he had avowed for the retention of the existing ministers were also terminated, and would at last call themselves to his councils. Without being aware of it, from the moment that Parliament reassembled, which it did in the first week of the new year, they took and adhered to a line of conduct which materially lessened any inclination that, from early prepossessions he may have felt, to entrust them with the chief direction of affairs. For he had gradually come to embrace the opinions of his father and the existing ministers on the subject of the Catholic claims; but in the debate on the address Lord Grenville closed a most vehement attack on the Administration by a pointed reference to these claims, as a right the settlement of which would no longer admit "of procrastination, of irresolution, or of further consideration." And before the end of the month both he and Lord Grey exerted most elaborate efforts in support of a motion made by Lord Fitzwilliam, "to take the present state of Ireland into consideration," which avowedly had for its principal object the instant removal of all restrictions on the Roman Catholics. As such it was opposed not only by Lord Liverpool, who reminded the House that Mr. Pitt, whose opinions in favour of emancipation had been repeatedly referred to by the speakers on the opposite side, "with all his anxiety for the measure (and anxious for it he admitted him to have been), had yet declared that he would never propose it without at the same time proposing securities for the Church of England and the constitution in general;" but it was also resisted by Lord Wellesley, who, though a firm supporter of the principle of religious equality, objected strongly to the time at which, and the manner in which, the question was now brought forward. A similar motion was proposed in the House of Commons by Lord Morpeth: but both he and Lord Fitzwilliam were defeated by majorities of nearly a hundred. As no one expected a different result, the policy of such an invitation

of defeat may well be questioned : it certainly for a moment injured the very clients of whom the two lords constituted themselves the champions, by inducing one so generally inclined to support them as Lord Wellesley to administer to the Roman Catholic leaders and their advocates a dignified and severe rebuke of the tone which they had adopted. "Their demand," as he said, "had been put forth in the array of war, and no alternative was offered but submission or battle ;" while the feeling which this language expressed was shared by others, and to all appearance by none more keenly than the prince regent.

It is remarkable that this was the last act of Lord Wellesley as one of his ministers. His colleagues might well have thought his speech partly dictated by a desire to display a complete agreement with them. It was rather the forerunner of a rupture with them ; unaccountable in itself, and rendered more strange by other circumstances which occurred almost at the same moment, and which might have been expected to bind him closer than ever to those who had been the instruments of a measure which could not fail to have given him high gratification. Early in February the restrictions which had prevented the regent from exercising the full authority of the sovereign terminated ; and the King's physicians, who had been closely examined on the subject at the first meeting of Parliament, gave scarcely any hope that he would ever revive. Till July they had been sanguine about his ultimate restoration to health of both body and mind ; but during the latter part of the summer and throughout the autumn and winter he had grown manifestly worse ; and it was apparently only a professional unwillingness to admit any case to be hopeless that prevented them from pronouncing his Majesty's present condition irremediable. A few days before the expiration of those restrictions intelligence was received of the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo ; and the very first use the regent made of his unfettered authority was to reward the conqueror for his most brilliant

exploit. He created him Earl of Wellington, and sent down a message to Parliament requesting the Houses to enable him to settle an annuity of 2,000*l.* a year on him in addition to the grant which had already been bestowed for his previous exploits. The capture of that great fortress was, however, manifestly only a forerunner of other similar enterprises: its chief importance indeed lay in the degree in which its possession would facilitate them; and Lord Wellesley's original reason for exchanging his embassy in the Peninsula for the seals of a Secretary of State had been avowed to be the belief that as a member of the Cabinet he should be able to render his brother more efficient support than in any other position. Yet, just at the moment when, if his presence in the councils of the sovereign had ever been useful to the general, it was likely to be more important than ever, he suddenly resigned his office, on grounds which can hardly be said to have been ever very satisfactorily explained. Lord Liverpool, who of all the Cabinet had probably been originally the most anxious to secure his co-operation, was greatly vexed, as will be seen from the following letter, in which he communicated the news to Wellington:

February, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

I am very much obliged to you for your two letters on the subject of your intended operations; they afford me all the information I could expect or even desire. I am fully aware that any plan of campaign formed at this period of the year must be subject to those contingencies to which all important and extended operations are liable from the events of war; you may rely therefore on my discretion in communicating your present intentions to as few persons as possible.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of informing you that Lord Wellesley has intimated to the Prince Regent his intention of resigning his situation in the Government. I am not aware of the existence of any distinct difference of opinion on any political question of importance which has led to this determination. He says generally that he has not the weight in the



Government which he expected when he accepted office. I have never seen any want of attention to his opinion, nor do I recollect a single question (except one of comparatively little moment lately, respecting the King's and Regent's establishment) to which he entered a dissent. The Government through a Cabinet is necessarily a Government *inter pares*, in which every man must expect to have his opinion and his despatches canvassed; and this previous friendly canvass of opinion and measures appears to be absolutely necessary under a constitution where the public acts of Government will be ultimately hostilely debated in Parliament. I have always regretted that Lord Wellesley's habits of late have prevented his seeing as much of his colleagues and mixing as much in general business as is usual with persons in public office. I do not believe he has attended more than half the Cabinet meetings which have taken place since he has been in Government; and this circumstance, combined with others, unavoidably prevented him from having the same common feelings with his colleagues as exist amongst those who not only act but live together. Lord Wellesley declares it is not his intention to go into Opposition, and he does not even wish his son to resign his seat at the Treasury.

The event is as yet a secret, but it must be known in a few days. If you wish to know my opinion as to the effect of it, I am persuaded it will not, under present circumstances, materially prejudice the Government. The Prince takes it very quietly, and appears now determined to support the present Government with all his influence. Indeed, he says he has no alternative: this may appear to you to be strange after all that has passed: but so it is. It is Perceval's intention immediately to sound Castlereagh about his return to office.

I am yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

Wellington himself was greatly annoyed at his brother's conduct, which, with his complaints of his colleagues, he pronounced to be wholly unreasonable. In Parliament the marquis, who had been naturally expected to explain the reasons of his resignation, was wholly and strangely silent on the subject: and at a subsequent period some of his

friends, evidently authorised by himself, put forward an explanation of it which did not render it more intelligible. The truth would seem to be that Lord Wellesley, conscious of great abilities and a deservedly high reputation, had contracted a certain impatient arrogance from his long habit of uncontrolled authority in the East; and that, under the influence of this feeling, he had expected greater deference to be paid to the slightest intimation of his opinions than could be conceded.<sup>1</sup> Great, however, as his talents unquestionably were, it can hardly be said that either the Administration or the country suffered from his retirement; for he was replaced by Lord Castlereagh: and that statesman, during the most eventful and critical period of the next two years, discharged the duties of his office both at home and abroad with a sagacity, decision, and resolution that no one could have exceeded, and perhaps hardly any one could have equalled.

The general expectation, as we have seen, was that the changes in the Administration would not have been thus limited. The Prince himself was desirous to make them more extensive, though the plan which he proposed to himself was very different from that which the leaders of the Opposition had reckoned on his forming. They had felt confident that, the moment the restrictions on his authority should have expired, and the whole power of the State should have come to be vested in him as much as if he were actually sovereign, he would unceremoniously dismiss the advisers of his father, and place the government in their hands. If, since the fall of the Grenville Cabinet in 1807, he had ever entertained such an idea, the events of the past year had done much to change his purpose. Not only had a more intimate acquaintance with the ministers led him to conceive a greater regard for them as men, and a far higher estimate of their capacity for office than he had previously entertained (and few princes have ever been more

<sup>1</sup> It had been said of him, on his return, that he was a grand specimen of a sultanized Englishman.

capable than he, when unswayed by his passions, of appreciating great abilities and great qualities), but he knew that a change of the Ministry was always held to indicate a change of system ; and to make the slightest change in the policy which was being pursued, or even to do any act which might induce any party, either at home or abroad, to imagine the likelihood of such a change, he looked on as not only unwise but dangerous. To use his own words,<sup>1</sup> "He could not but reflect with satisfaction on the events which had distinguished the short period of his restricted regency. Instead of suffering the loss of any of her possessions by the gigantic force which had been employed against her, Great Britain had added most important acquisitions to her empire. The national faith had been preserved inviolate towards our allies : and, if character is strength as applied to a nation, the increased and increasing reputation of his Majesty's arms showed to the nations of the Continent how much they might achieve when animated by a glorious spirit of resistance to a foreign yoke. In the critical situation of the war in the Peninsula he should be most anxious to avoid any measure which could lead his allies to suppose that he meant to depart from the present system. Perseverance alone could achieve the great object in question ; and he could not withhold his approbation from those who had honorably distinguished themselves in support of it."

The reasons which he thus gave for feeling abundant satisfaction with his existing ministers were solid and statesmanlike. They were amply sufficient to make him discard the idea of any sweeping change, if he had ever entertained it. But he still retained so much of his former predilections for the Whigs, for Fox's friends and Fox's kindred, as to wish to find room for a section of them in the Administration ; and, as there were

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to the Duke of York, written in order to be communicated to Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, and of which a copy was sent by himself to Mr. Perceval.

among them men of deservedly high reputation in the country for uprightness and ability, he conceived that the union of such with his present advisers would add strength to his government. He was aware too that Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool were desirous of such an alliance, if it could be purchased without the sacrifice of principle. And, therefore, in the conclusion of his letter he commissioned his brother to communicate his wish to Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, with the addition that he had himself sent a copy of his letter to the Prime Minister. The details of the interview between the duke and the two peers which was the result of this communication have been so fully and repeatedly narrated that it is unnecessary to recapitulate them here. It is sufficient to mention that both lords agreed in declining any attempt to negotiate with the existing ministers, alleging that they differed from them "on almost every political subject." But it is worthy of remark that the duke avowed to them the prince's objection to the question of Catholic emancipation being brought forward, and that not as a new opinion but as one which they were aware that he had entertained for many years. From it he never afterwards swerved: and his sentiments on the question may have been a principal reason for the steadfastness with which Lord Liverpool himself continued to resist concession; for the question was again brought forward in the House of Lords a few weeks later: and, though he opposed the motion to go at once into committee on the subject, he now rested his opposition more on existing circumstances than on principle; and in the explanation of his general views of policy which, in the negotiations which ensued on the death of Mr. Perceval, he gave to Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, he "protested against its" from any declaration of his that it was or his opinion that under no circumstances possible to make any alteration in

the Roman Catholics," adding that "On the last occasion on which the subject was discussed in Parliament, he had expressly stated that circumstances might arise in which, in his judgment, some alteration in those laws might be desirable."

He had even gone further than he then stated, in intimating a possibility that he might, in some more favorable contingency, be willing to make concessions; for he had declared, to quote his own words, that "he did subscribe to the principle which the noble lord [Lord Donoughmore, who had brought the question forward] had laid down as the foundation of his reasoning on the subject, that every restraint, civil, political, or religious, was to be considered as an evil in itself, and to be justified only by necessity." Nor was another observation which he made at the same time, that "it was material, with a view of unravelling the argument, that it should be understood that it was not upon any principle of direct exclusion that the Catholics were excluded, but by the indirect operation of tests," without a very important bearing both upon the question itself and his own view of it. All imputations on the good faith and general loyalty of the Roman Catholics he most pointedly disclaimed. "He did not believe they held the doctrine of not keeping faith with heretics; and he verily believed that, as far as any moral principle went, not connected with the Established Church, their institutions were as pure as our own."

At the same time he could not admit that the authority which the Romish Church claimed was purely and solely spiritual; and he quoted a pamphlet published within the last two years by one of the most learned men of the Roman Catholic body, which expressly stated that "the bishops claimed the power of imprisoning in episcopal matters, of whipping, and inflicting other tortures; and also of settling the fees and incomes of the inferior clergy; and could any man," he asked, "say that these were not powers of a temporal nature?" Of one prediction on which

he ventured, almost as his closing argument, we may be said to be witnessing the fulfilment at the present day. "His sincere opinion was that the immediate effect of the measure proposed would be merely to benefit a small proportion of our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects directly and immediately; but at last it would begin to be considered by them with respect to their Church Establishment, whether they should pay for the maintenance of two Churches or one, whether they should pay their own clergy instead of the Protestant clergy. He was sure that their Lordships would not lose sight of the interests of those whose very circumstances, from the nature of their situations, would, above all others, be most affected by the measure, the great body of the clergy of Ireland. But, though Lord Donoughmore had said that he was a friend to the Protestant Establishment in Ireland, (in fact the whole of his argument went to this: that there would be no safety for that Establishment until the Roman Catholic clergy were established in Ireland), he himself maintained that the very inference of all the arguments and views that had been urged on the other side of the House went to this: that Ireland should be made a Roman Catholic country, and that the Establishment of Ireland should be Roman Catholic. He should not even be surprised to hear that the Irish Protestant bishops themselves, having first generously made over a portion of their endowments for the peace and maintenance of their Catholic brethren, were ready to make a further proposition to subject all his Majesty's dominions, by law, to a division of the produce of ecclesiastical dues between the two Churches. That this was one of the consequences which would follow the concession of the Catholic claims he most sincerely believed."

The ministers, while thus as it were taking up new ground, resting their opposition more on the circumstances of the moment than on principle (indeed to the principle of concession it was notorious that one most important member of the Cabinet, Lord Castlereagh, was favorable),

were as successful as ever. Lord Donoughmore's motion was rejected by a majority of more than seventy Peers: in the House of Commons they prevailed by a still greater number. And as each successive victory not only increased their strength in Parliament and in the country, but also gratified the Regent by the sanction which both Houses thus appeared to give to his decision to maintain them, there seemed every likelihood that the end of the session might see them a strong Government, enabled fearlessly to carry out their own policy in every particular, from a consciousness of the security of their position, when they, and the whole kingdom with them, were suddenly thrown into confusion by one of those strange crimes which, committed without provocation and without inducement, almost seem as if they were permitted for the purpose of showing how vain is all the foresight of the wisest, how unsubstantial the hopes of the most prudent, since all can be baffled and disconcerted by the act of a single person, destitute of wealth, or ability, or character, or any quality whatever calculated to give him importance, save his power of mischief.

On the 11th of May, as Mr. Perceval was passing through one of the passages of the House of Commons, he was assassinated by a man named Bellingham, a merchant of some respectability, whose brain had been in some degree turned by losses in his trade, which he attributed to the refusal of the Ministry to grant him the relief which he had claimed for them. The murder struck the whole kingdom with horror and real sorrow, for the minister thus suddenly taken away was a man in whom the difficulties of a most arduous office, and the sense of responsibility for the most momentous concerns and interests, had awakened or developed talents which he had not previously been supposed to possess. We have seen the description that Lord Liverpool gave of the ascendancy which he had already acquired over the House of Commons; and even those who most differed from his policy felt the influence of his private



virtues, and gave cordial praise to his high-minded and unassuming integrity; his sincere patriotism; and, in the greatest eagerness and heat of debate, his unvarying candour and moderation and fairness to his adversaries; and neither they nor his followers could be insensible to the gravity of the political consequences which might be expected to result from his sudden removal. Even amid the first poignancy of their sorrow for their friend, the ministers were forced to consult how his place was to be filled, for the wish at once expressed by the Regent was to make no change in the Administration beyond such addition as was necessitated by the vacancies created at the Treasury and Exchequer; and the first and most important question, therefore, for the remaining ministers to resolve, was whether they could so fill up those vacancies as to procure an accession of strength in Parliament. Of the statesmen not in office the most important were Lord Wellesley, Lord Grey, and Lord Grenville, among the peers, and Canning in the House of Commons; and a meeting of the Cabinet decided that, unless at least a willingness to conciliate were shown, by inviting the co-operation of one section of them, their own ability to carry on the Government successfully and permanently must be very questionable. Of the four, Lord Grenville and Lord Grey were out of the question, from their positive refusal to join the Ministry three months before, and the grounds on which they had justified it. But there was no such difference of opinion on the general policy of the country, with the exception of the single question of Catholic emancipation, between the existing Cabinet and Lord Wellesley and Canning. To them, therefore, it was decided that a proposal should be made to re-enter the Administration, and as, besides consenting to this measure, the Regent also cordially coincided in the unanimous opinion of his existing ministers that the intended negotiation and the subsequent government of the country could be carried on by no one with so much probability of success as by Lord Liverpool, it was

settled, as a preliminary step, that in inviting the accession of those whose co-operation it was desired to gain, he should announce himself as the Prime Minister.

Even those who most felt the value of the assistance which these most able men could afford were not sanguine of their consent. Since Lord Donoughmore's motion, another debate on the Catholic question had taken place, in which they both declared strongly against any further delay being interposed to its settlement; and it was also apprehended that personal motives would intervene. The causes alleged by Lord Wellesley for his resignation three months before were beyond a doubt almost entirely of a personal character; for he had resisted all attempt at reconciliation by a final declaration that he would not serve under Mr. Perceval.<sup>1</sup> And, now that that minister was removed, it was even more probable that he would refuse to act under any other head, but that it would be found that his real aim was to become Prime Minister himself.

A somewhat kindred motive, it was feared, might influence Canning, since it was also fixed that Lord Castlereagh was to be the leader in the House of Commons. Canning was forward in declaring that "no objection of a personal sort should prevent him from uniting with the existing Administration in the public service, if he could do so with honour." But subsequent events showed that this proviso was of a very elastic nature; and he, as well as Lord Wellesley, absolutely refused the offers made to them: Canning alleging differences with the Ministry on the Catholic question alone, Lord Wellesley resting his decision partly on this ground, and still more on "the imperfect scale on which the efforts in the Peninsula were conducted," a point on which his own brother, the general in command, had already pronounced his complaints unreasonable.

The negotiation with these statesmen having thus failed, the Prince, who appears hardly to have coincided with the ministers in their opinion of its importance, desired that they

<sup>1</sup> Pearce's *Life of Lord Wellesley*, iii. 209.

should consider in what other way they could fill up the vacancies caused by Perceval's death and Lord Liverpool's removal to the Treasury. Mr. Vansittart was at once appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all that was necessary seemed to be to find a statesman fit for the Secretaryship of State; but a feeling was rising that the Ministry, as it was about to be reconstructed, would be inadequate to the conduct of affairs at so critical a period, and, on the day after Mr. Vansittart's writ had been moved for, one of the members for Yorkshire, Mr. Stuart Wortley, invited the formal expression of this feeling by moving an address to the Regent, "praying him, under the present circumstances of the country, to form a strong and efficient Administration." On many accounts it was singular that such a motion should have come from such a quarter; for the mover had hitherto been a supporter of the Ministry, and especially agreed with them in their views of the Catholic question: and the reasons he gave for his motion did not lessen the strangeness of his bringing it forward at all. He declared that, "after the late discussion and division on the question of the Catholic claims, he thought all further opposition to them vain;" and therefore he must for the future distrust a Ministry which still resisted them. Yet, as we have seen, in each House the advocates of concession had been defeated by most decisive majorities. Another of his arguments was, that "in 1803 the present Government had been tried and found wanting." It was true that most of the existing Cabinet had also been ministers in that year; but the circumstances and the distribution of offices were wholly different. That Ministry had fallen chiefly on account of Mr. Addington's inferiority to Pitt as a financier: there was no similar weakness in that branch of the Government to complain of, alleged or anticipated, now; still less was there any member of the Opposition with any pre-eminent reputation in that line; and the cause which had chiefly prompted Mr. Wortley to take such a step seemed to be his affection for the memory of Mr. Perceval, whom

he described as "the chief, if he might not say the only, support of the Administration while he lived," and to whom he appeared to think it due to pronounce none of his colleagues competent to supply his place.

Lord Milton, who seconded him, was equally unreasonable and more illogical, the argument on which he chiefly rested being, that the fact of the ministers having invited Lord Wellesley and Canning to join them was of itself a confession that without their aid they could not carry on the Government. He forgot that, as two offices were vacant, it was absolutely necessary to introduce some new members to the Cabinet to fill them, and that, though the invitation to those whom he mentioned might be allowed to prove their belief that, under all circumstances, they were the men calculated to afford the most useful aid, it certainly did not follow that they were the only persons so qualified. Other supporters of the motion dwelt with pertinacious exaggeration on "the dangers and difficulties of the country," which they affirmed to be unexampled ; though, as far as the war was concerned, the dangers were already passing away, and the captures of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, which had already made the campaign of 1812 illustrious, supplied abundant proof that Wellington's genius had now brought our affairs in the Peninsula into such a state that the enemy had more to fear from him than he from them. Canning, with somewhat more doubtful taste than he usually displayed, spoke and voted for the motion. Mr. Ryder the Home Secretary, and Lord Castlereagh, argued against it ; the former pointing out with not unmerited satisfaction the success with which, since the retirement of the Duke of Portland, the present ministers had carried on the war and the general affairs of the country, and pointedly and especially appealing to the great capacity shown by the new "head of the administration, the Earl of Liverpool, the same person who had been so long successfully conducting that part of the affairs of the country which, on so many occasions, had experienced the appro-

bation of the House and of the nation. If the Cabinet, which was not yet completely filled up, was the old Ministry, what had happened to justify their condemnation by the House, which had so often approved their conduct? If it was a new Ministry, where was the fairness of condemning it without a trial?" Lord Castlereagh who always adopted the boldest line in debate, manfully justified the Ministry for not abandoning their offices either on the lamentable loss of their former chief, or on the refusal of two former colleagues, however splendid might be their individual ability, to join them. He affirmed, with notorious truth, that the obstacles to the desired union had not come from the Ministry, and plausibly argued that the motion was to some extent one of reproach to the Regent, as if he had not done his utmost to form an Administration entitled to the public confidence, and able efficiently to serve the country. His arguments were the more weighty because it was well known that he had at all times been favorable to Catholic emancipation; and he averred himself to be still desirous to see that measure carried, though "he would not suffer it to be made a stalking-horse for the mere purpose of embarrassing a Government at a period when objects of so much greater magnitude occupied the attention of the country." What was, perhaps, as remarkable as any other circumstance in the debate was, that so important a question had not attracted a very full House, not 350 members were present at the division, which was unfavorable to the Government by a slender majority of four votes.

The majority, such as it was, was an accidental one, since the division was taken while four or six steady supporters of the ministers were momentarily absent in other parts of the House, and were thus locked out while fully intending to support them; but in so close a division a vote or two was of no practical consequence, and neither they nor the Regent could refuse to accept the decision of the House as an avowal of want of confidence in the Government. Accordingly they tendered their resignations, and

the Prince at once took steps to form another Administration, and entrusted the task to Lord Wellesley. Lord Wellesley consulted Canning; and the course which they adopted was one that had at least the merit of singularity. It was no secret that Lord Grey and Lord Grenville had lately unhesitatingly refused the invitation of the Prince to join Lord Liverpool and his colleagues on the ground of differences of opinion on almost every subject. Yet the first step now taken by Lord Wellesley and Canning was to invite both these parties, whose disagreement had been thus publicly proclaimed, to unite with themselves, who, on one important point or another, disagreed with each. Of the leading principles of the intended Administration, which were stated to be the early settlement of the Catholic question and the prosecution of the war in the Peninsula with all the means of the country, the last was indeed in harmony with the views and all the past conduct of Lord Liverpool, and the first, if unpalatable to Lord Liverpool himself, was not so to all his party. But within the last day or two an event had taken place which had given them all the deepest personal offence. Lord Wellesley had scarcely rejected Lord Liverpool's offer, and Mr. Wortley's motion was still pending, when a document appeared in the public newspapers purporting to be the authorised statement of the grounds of Lord Wellesley's resignation in the preceding February, and bearing also the appearance of a public attack on Mr. Perceval's memory, while the sorrow of his friends for his loss was still fresh and unallayed. Friends of Lord Wellesley afterwards took the blame on themselves of having communicated the document to the papers without his privity or permission, and added that he had felt the greatest distress at its publication;<sup>1</sup> but it

<sup>1</sup> See a statement by Colonel Meyrick Shawe on the subject of Lord Wellesley's resignation, published in the Supplementary Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, vii. 257—288. It must be remarked, however, that Colonel Shawe omits to explain how the paper had been communicated to the *Morning Chronicle*, in which it had already appeared before it was sent to the *Times*.



was not strange that Lord Liverpool and those who acted with him should have failed to conceive the possibility of any third person venturing to publish such a paper without the authority of the person principally concerned; or that, looking on its publication as the act of Lord Wellesley himself, they should have deeply resented it as a treacherous and unpardonable display of ill-feeling towards the dead. And under this impression Lord Liverpool, in his reply, abstained from entering into any discussion of the intended policy of the new Cabinet, because he and his colleagues "all felt themselves bound, particularly after what had recently passed, to decline the proposal of becoming members of an Administration to be formed by Lord Wellesley."

The attempt to form a junction with the Whig party proved equally unsuccessful, apparently because the leaders declined to pledge themselves to an increased exertion of our military power in the Peninsula, of which they doubted the compatibility with the financial resources of the country; and Canning made a renewed effort to obtain a more conciliatory reply from Lord Liverpool, remonstrating in a friendly manner against the wisdom of resting his refusal to discuss Lord Wellesley's proposals on what bore the appearance of personal hostility. He failed, as will be shown by the following reply which he received:

Fife House, May 24th, 1812.

MY DEAR CANNING,

I have this moment received your answer to my letter of last night.

As that letter was not written without due consideration, I do not feel that it can be necessary for me to call my colleagues again together upon the subject of it.

I can answer however for myself (and I am confident equally for them), that I am not actuated in declining the proposal made to us by any objection of a nature *purely personal*; but when I advert to the opinions and statements recently sent forth to the world respecting public men with whom I have been con-



nected, and public measures in which I have been engaged, I do not feel that I should have acted consistently with my own honour and character, or with the respect which I must ever, and shall ever, feel to my departed friend, if, under such circumstances, I could have consented to have entertained the proposal which you were authorised to submit to me.

As these considerations afforded an insuperable obstacle to my becoming a party to the proposed arrangements, I thought it wholly unnecessary to enter into any explanation on the two principles on which the Administration is stated as being intended to be formed, or on other points of the greatest public importance ; and I must protest against any inference whatever being drawn from my silence in this respect.

I can assure you that I am most willing to render you every degree of justice for the motives which have dictated your answer to my letter, and I remain,

Yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

For the moment Lord Wellesley abandoned his attempt to form an Administration. And the Prince was greatly perplexed. He thought that he had now no alternative but to retain his existing advisers. They took a different view of the situation ; and while by a Cabinet minute they expressed to his Royal Highness "their decided conviction that no public benefit was likely to arise from any further attempt being made to bring about an union between them and Marquis Wellesley and Mr. Canning," by another they pressed upon him their advice that "he would be graciously pleased to take such immediate measures as might appear most advisable to himself for filling up the principal offices of the Government." He summoned them to a personal conference, ostensibly because "he was desirous to learn from each of them the grounds of the opinions which they had thus communicated to him," but probably with a secret belief that, in a personal conversation with them, his own address and influence might induce them to modify their resolution. However, before the appointed hour arrived he changed his summons for a demand that each

should separately explain to him the reasons which had influenced him; and Lord Liverpool's motives were laid before him in the following letter:

Fife House, May 28th, 1812.

Lord Liverpool has the honour to inform your Royal Highness, in obedience to your Royal Highness's commands, that he concurred in the opinion contained in the paper which was transmitted to your Royal Highness by your confidential servants yesterday, respecting an union between your present servants and Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, for the following reasons:

First, because he is most fully satisfied, from all that has recently passed, that the difference of opinion which exists between Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning on the one hand, and himself on the other, on the subject of the Roman Catholic claims, is so essential, not only as regards the points of the question itself, but as to the conduct which it is the duty of Government to pursue respecting it, that there is no probability that, under present circumstances, they could co-operate with advantage, as ministers of the Crown, in the public service.

Secondly, because Lord Liverpool is convinced that, however desirable it must have been to procure an accession of strength, in order to enable your Royal Highness's present servants to carry on the administration of government successfully, the advantage of the assistance of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning could only at this time have been obtained by the loss of strength in other quarters not less important. The proposed arrangement could not therefore have been made with a better prospect of ultimate success, and it would have been purchased by sacrifices which would have been inconsistent with the honour and character of the persons who were parties to it.

The soundness of these arguments could not be denied; and at all events the letter was so conclusive as to the resolution of the ministers that the Regent renewed Lord Wellesley's commission; and the Marquis reopened a communication with the Whig nobles. His statement as to his own complete authority was fuller than that which he had announced before, and on th

it was less successful. He stated that the Prince had decided on appointing him Prime Minister; while their share in the Administration was to extend to a third of the Cabinet offices; and he again implied a hope that he might enlist in the Prince's service some of the existing ministers. They objected to the stipulation as to the number of their own adherents who were thus to be appointed to office, as introducing "a principle of disunion and jealousy," and "establishing within the Cabinet itself a system of combination inconsistent with the prosecution of any uniform and beneficial course of policy," and peremptorily "declined all participation in a Government constituted on such principles."

Once more Lord Wellesley relinquished his undertaking. Lord Moira, a noble of high personal character, but of no political experience, failed to prevail on the Whig leaders even to discuss the subject of Lord Wellesley's proposals and views further; and the next step taken by the Regent was to entrust the arrangement of an Administration to Lord Moira himself. With him in this new position neither Lord Grey nor Lord Grenville could refuse to negotiate, though in reality they were resolved to consent to no arrangement which should not place the entire power in their own hands.<sup>1</sup> They were fortunate, however, in the discussions taking a turn which justified their final disagreement with Lord Moira, and showed them in the light

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly shown by the following passage in Lord Grey's letter to Lord Moira ("Life and Opinions of Lord Grey," by Lieutenant-General C. Grey, p. 291): "It is my deliberate conviction that till the Prince shall see that, to render our services useful to himself, it is necessary that he should give us full powers in making the arrangements in every part of the Government, in the same manner as he professed to do in the spring of 1811" [this is clearly a mistake, for in 1811 the Prince had declared his resolution to retain Perceval in office], and as he promised to do whenever the restrictions on his authority should cease; in short, till he is prepared to give us his full confidence both as to men and measures; it certainly is not desirable for us, and perhaps not for him, that we should be called to his councils."

of champions of a constitutional principle. They required that the changes to be made in the ministerial departments should be accompanied by a corresponding rearrangement in the great offices of the household, and Lord Moira looked upon this condition as derogatory to the Prince's dignity; though the Prince himself entertained no such feeling, and though those who filled the offices in question had already formed the resolution of resigning them. On this petty difference this negotiation too was broken off, though the soundness of the principle for which the Whig leaders contended was undeniable, and the only instance in which since that time it has been called in question was by those who after Lord Grey became the leaders of his party, and who, though for a moment they succeeded in breaking down the rule, brought an obloquy on themselves by their very success which more than counterbalanced the advantage of the short prolongation of power which it secured to them.

Inadequate as was the cause which thus put an end to the last attempt that was or could be made to effect a change in the Government, the result was most fortunate for the country. Nothing remained but that the old Administration should continue; accordingly on the 8th of June Lord Liverpool announced to the peers that he had been appointed Prime Minister: and it was obvious that his chance of carrying on the affairs of the country with credit and success was greatly strengthened by what had taken place. He and his colleagues owed their present position to no anxiety which they had shown to retain office, but solely to the inability of any other person or party to form an Administration. And so entirely was this the feeling of the House of Commons which had recently voted to displace them, that when, in the debate which ensued on their resumption of office, a motion similar in purport to Mr Wortley's, but rather milder in form, was brought forward, it was rejected by a majority of 125, and the ministers were thus in effect assured of the confidence of the House of Commons, which but three had been denied to them.

## CHAPTER XII.

Peculiar qualifications of Lord Liverpool for the lead in the Government—The Catholic question is made an open question—The policy or impolicy of such an arrangement—Debate on it—Negotiations with Canning—The lead of the House of Commons—Lord Chatham in 1766—Labours which fell to Lord Castlereagh's share, and his performance of them—Mr. Peel is made Secretary for Ireland—Original difficulties and eventual triumphs of the Liverpool Administration.

LORD LIVERPOOL was thus, on his forty-second birthday, placed in the highest position which a British subject can attain, the chief direction of the affairs of his native land. And, in addition to his natural qualifications for so arduous a post, he was more than usually fitted for it by the training of the last eleven years. Of the preceding Prime Ministers since the beginning of the reign some had had no previous official experience whatever when they were suddenly placed in the highest office of all; others had held a single office for a period too brief to have given them ~~any~~ great practical insight into the working of even one department;<sup>1</sup> but Lord Liverpool, besides his period of probation in subordinate posts, had filled successively every Secretaryship of State, holding each for some considerable time; and had thus acquired a thorough personal acquaintance with all their duties and details. At the Foreign Office

<sup>1</sup> Lord Rockingham in 1765, the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Portland in 1782, and Mr. Addington, had held no office when they were first made Prime Ministers; Lord Bute and Mr. Pitt had each held but a single Cabinet office for a few months, and no office out of the Cabinet.

he had become known to the leading diplomatists of other countries, and had learnt to appreciate their characters and abilities. As Home Secretary he had become conversant with the varied interests and objects of the different classes of his own countrymen, and especially he had been led to study the condition of Ireland, which he recognised as being then, as subsequent statesmen have since been forced to confess it to be, his chief difficulty. As Secretary for War and the Colonies every kind of subject had engaged his consideration: in respect of the war, not merely the military operations, but also, and still more, the means of supplying our armies with reinforcements, with provisions, and, above all, with money; in respect of our foreign settlements, their resources for defence, and in some instances for attack, their internal character, their productions, their trade, the disposition and genius of the natives, in all the infinite varieties to be found in an empire stretching unto every quarter of the globe. So that it is not too much to say that, when he first took the reins of the Government, there was no one branch of it with which he was not thoroughly familiar.

Undoubtedly he had anxieties, and even difficulties, to contend with; and the greatness of them on the principal question of domestic policy, the claims of the Roman Catholics, was shown by the adoption of a line of conduct for which there was no precedent at the time, though since that day the weakness of more than one Administration has induced its chief to follow the example then set. The concession or rejection of those claims was left an open question, or, to borrow the language in which Lord Castlereagh explained to the House of Commons the course resolved on by the Cabinet, "In submission to the growing change of public opinion in favour of those claims, and the real sentiments of certain members of the Government, it had been resolved upon as a principle that the discussion of this question should be left free from all interference on the part of the Government, and that every member of that

Government should on it be left to the free and unbiassed suggestions of his own conscientious discretion."

It cannot be denied that the necessity for an Administration to act with entire unanimity upon any question of policy is increased, not diminished, by the importance of the question; and that on a grave and momentous subject to leave each member free to pronounce a separate judgment, so that one may resist what another advocates, is on that subject to abdicate the functions of government altogether.

If, as Lord Castlereagh implied (and a very few days supplied evidence of his accuracy), public opinion was setting so strongly in favour of concession that it was now impossible to form a Cabinet on the principle of maintaining the restrictions, that fact rather supplied an additional and cogent argument in favour of an immediate settlement of the question than a justification of the course adopted. It was hardly so unstatesmanlike to entertain a wrong opinion as to have no opinion at all. And we fear that in thus acquiescing in the disagreement of his colleagues on a subject of such magnitude Lord Liverpool cannot be altogether acquitted of having established a pernicious example for future ministers, of which, as they have been but too glad to follow it, the country is to this day constantly feeling the evil effects.

For the present moment, however, the resolution thus declared undoubtedly answered a part of its end by smoothing the path of the Cabinet, and weakening the Opposition. As we have already mentioned, the motion, which again proposed an address to the Regent to beg him to form a strong and efficient Administration, and which, therefore, would have been tantamount to a declaration of want of confidence in that which was now established, was defeated by a large majority; and, even before it was brought forward, Lord Liverpool felt confident of defeating it, as will be seen by the following letter to Lord Wellington:



June 10th, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

You will not be surprised that, in the confusion and uncertainty which has prevailed for the last three weeks, I should have refrained from troubling you with any private letters. Indeed, the untoward turn which events have taken with respect to some of those with whom you are most nearly connected must have made it painful for me to write, or for you to receive a letter upon some part of the transactions in which we have been here engaged, and I felt that I should best meet your feelings by abstaining, at least under present circumstances, from explanations which at another time I should be happy to give you. The result of all the negotiations which have been passing is that the Government has devolved again upon the remains of Mr. Perceval's party, and, in consequence of the unaccountable conduct of the Opposition, has devolved upon them with a reasonable chance of their being at least able to get through the present session. You may rely upon it that the country is decidedly with us, as against the Opposition, and that no Administration could have been formed of which the substantive strength did not consist either of our party or of that of the Opposition.

With respect to myself, I feel placed in a most arduous and difficult situation, from which I should have been most happy, on many accounts, to have been relieved; but I could not, under the circumstances, have shrunk from it with honour; and I owe it now to the Prince to use my best endeavours for carrying on his government.

I thought perhaps it might have been acceptable to you to have had Pole for my successor in the War Department: but I am not surprised, under the present circumstances, that he should have declined it. It is intended, therefore, that Lord Bathurst should succeed me.

I believe you are sufficiently acquainted with him to know that there are few men so assiduous at business, and that you could not have a more agreeable correspondent. You may rely with the utmost confidence on a continuance of every possible degree of support from the Government. They feel the importance of a successful issue to the contest in the Peninsula, and they are

determined to make every effort in that quarter compatible with our resources, and which is consistent with the security of the British empire.—I am, &c. &c. LIVERPOOL.

This letter crossed on its way one from the general, in reply to an earlier one in which Lord Liverpool had informed him of Perceval's death, and of his own acceptance of the Treasury, a few days before Mr. Wortley's first motion. Wellington's reply was characteristic.

Fuente Guinaldo, June 9th, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

I received your letter of the 16th, and I have felt, in common, I believe, with the whole civilized world, for the loss of Mr. Perceval. The event is one of the most extraordinary and most unfortunate that ever occurred, as it affects the public interests and his family and friends.

All parties in Parliament appear to have behaved well upon this melancholy occasion.

You have undertaken a most gigantic task, and I don't know how you will get through it. When I was in office matters were not very successfully carried on in the House of Commons when Mr. Canning, Lord Castlereagh, and Perceval were on the Treasury Bench, and, to all appearance at least, acted well together. I should think that you would have the assistance of both the survivors of poor Perceval, and you will scarcely be able to get on in the House of Commons with only one of them.

However, there is nothing like trying ; and I can only assure your Lordship that I shall be happy if I can be of any use to you in any way.

Ever, my dear Lord,

Yours most sincerely,

WELLINGTON.

The spirit breathed in the last paragraph was akin to Lord Liverpool's own. In the original discussion on the probability of the Ministry being able to maintain itself after Perceval's death, he had been one of those least inclined to despond ; and the duty of "trying" was far more unquestionable now when every attempt to form any other

combination had failed, and his Administration seemed the only refuge from confusion and anarchy.

The Cabinet, as it was now formed, presented as little variation as possible from its former arrangement. Mr. Vansittart, as has been already mentioned, filled Mr. Perceval's place at the Exchequer, and the seals which Lord Liverpool had resigned were given to Lord Bathurst. Lord Sidmouth exchanged the Presidency of the Council to become Home Secretary, and was succeeded in the post which he vacated by Lord Harrowby. Lord Melville removed to the Admiralty from the Board of Control, and the affairs of India were entrusted to the care of Lord Buckinghamshire. It proved to be an arrangement which lasted with scarcely any alteration for several years; but it was not at first intended to be permanent, as Lord Liverpool was most anxious to prevail on Canning to join him: his colleagues generally showed the same feeling, and he had no reason to expect any unwillingness on the part of Canning himself, now that the treatment of the Catholic question by the Cabinet left him free to follow the dictates of his own judgment on that subject. On this question Canning himself took a line evidently designed to be conciliatory to the Government. Before Perceval's death he had given notice of his intention to move some resolutions calculated, if carried, to compel an early settlement of it. His motion had been inevitably postponed, and when, after the completion of the ministerial arrangements, he was about to bring it forward on the 22d of June, he submitted the resolutions which he had framed to Lord Liverpool, and at his suggestion modified them to an extent which was calculated to render them palatable to some of his colleagues in the Lower House, though not more acceptable to the Prime Minister himself. His language in finally proposing them, while in no respect shrinking from putting the case which he was advocating in the very strongest light, breathed the same spirit as his conduct; it was conciliatory and even complimentary towards those whom he

expected to oppose them, giving them every credit for the purest motives. And his prudence and moderation were rewarded by a large majority of 129 ; his supporters, among whom were found both Mr. Vansittart and Lord Castlereagh, more than doubling in number those who resisted his motion. And when, a few days later, Lord Wellesley brought forward a similar motion in the House of Lords, and Lord Liverpool rested his opposition chiefly on the vague character of the resolutions proposed, which did not specify the measures of relief designed for the Roman Catholics, and still less the securities to be substituted for the existing laws, the Peers also looked on the claims advocated by the Marquis with greater favour than on any previous occasion. Lord Eldon himself only encountered the resolution with a motion for the previous question, avowedly because "he did not wish at once and for ever to shut the door of conciliation against the Catholics ;" and even that modified opposition only succeeded by a single vote, the numbers being 126 to 125. The question seemed on the point of being carried : but the claims of the Roman Catholics were apparently regarded with less favour out of doors. The next year a new Parliament sanctioned the first steps towards concession by a far smaller majority, and eventually rejected a bill brought in by Grattan for their relief. The anti-Catholic feeling grew stronger and stronger, and after one or two more discussions the success of the advocates of emancipation seemed so hopeless that in some years they abstained from raising the question at all, probably thinking it wiser and kinder to the Roman Catholics themselves not to exasperate their opponents into stubbornness by repeated importunity ; and Lord Liverpool's and two more Administrations were destined to pass away before the question was finally settled under circumstances far less favorable to a prudent arrangement and to the exaction of the securities which the anti-Catholics looked on as necessary.

In suggesting to Canning such an alteration in his reso-

lutions as would enable many of his colleagues to support them, Lord Liverpool was acting even a more conciliatory part than Canning pursued in adopting his suggestions. But it was from no fear for the stability of his power that he had done so. On the contrary, the failure of Mr. Wortley's renewed motion,<sup>1</sup> which has been already mentioned, had caused him to feel perfectly secure on that point. And, on the very same day on which he forwarded his advice to Canning, he wrote to Lord Wellington that "the majority on Thursday in the House of Commons had had a very great effect; and though," he says, "our difficulties are not over, I see no reason for thinking that we shall not get through the session. The country is decidedly with us." Still this feeling did not diminish his desire to enlist in the Government the co-operation of Canning, who, in addition to his more solid qualities of large-minded statesmanship, decision, and energy, was without a rival as an orator in either House of Parliament. It is greatly to the honour of Lord Castlereagh that, forgetting their former quarrel, he was equally anxious to secure him as a colleague, and to further the Prime Minister's object at the cost of no inconsiderable personal sacrifice. That the negotiation failed was the fault of no one of the ministers. But few transactions have more remarkably shown the mischief done by officious friends. Canning, if left to himself, would have cordially closed with the offer made to him. It went beyond his most sanguine expectations.<sup>2</sup> He admitted himself to be highly flattered by it, and it was a flattery to

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the last chapter it has been called "a motion similar to Mr. Wortley's," and both expressions are correct. On the 11th of June Mr. Wortley brought forward a motion almost identical with that which he had carried three weeks before; but the division was taken on an amendment moved by Lord Milton, which differed from the original motion only in form, and was equally a motion of want of confidence in the existing Administration.

<sup>2</sup> "Mr. Canning more than once described this offer to me as perhaps the handsomest that ever was made to an individual."  
*Canning and his Times*, p. 298.

which he or any other statesman might well be pardoned for being susceptible. The first proposal was that Lord Bathurst should give up to him the seals of the War Office, which he had so lately received, and which the Prime Minister himself had lately held. When he declined this, from "obvious motives of delicacy," to quote his own words from a letter which he wrote to Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh even offered to place the office which he himself held at his disposal, and to undertake the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. It might have been supposed that motives of delicacy would have operated still more to prevent the acceptance of this office; but the Foreign Office was so decidedly the object of Canning's ambition and his preference, that to obtain it he overruled any scruples which he might have felt at taking advantage of his former antagonist's liberality; and the matter would probably have at once been settled to his great advantage, had not some adherents, who called themselves his friends, suggested that he ought also to demand the lead in the House of Commons.

When, on Perceval's death, Lord Liverpool first invited Canning and Lord Wellesley to join him, it was mentioned as one of the few points which were already settled that Lord Castlereagh was to have the lead, the management, that is to say, of the Government business, in the House of Commons; and, when Canning then declared that no objection of a personal character prevented his uniting with the Ministry, it must have been understood that he was principally referring to this arrangement. If he was willing to acquiesce in the lead being allotted to Lord Castlereagh then, when it was completely vacant, since it had hitherto of course been exercised by the Prime Minister, it was evidently much more reasonable to agree to such an arrangement now, when Lord Castlereagh was actually in possession of it, and could hardly be dispossessed of it without a serious imputation of his fitness for office. And Canning probably felt this, for he was not inclined to make any difficulty on the point himself, till he allowed himself



to be over-persuaded. Against his better judgment he demanded the lead as well as the seals; having been induced to make the demand, he naturally exerted all his ingenuity to justify it; and in the difficulty thus unluckily created the whole scheme was finally shipwrecked.<sup>1</sup> Not that the negotiation was at once broken off, or that many expedients were not suggested for the accommodation of the difficulty thus unfortunately and unreasonably created. But, while Lord Castlereagh was conciliatory and ingenious in conciliation, Canning was impracticable; the more so probably since he was (as he afterwards confessed) acting against his own conviction. The only concession which he could be brought to make was to express a willingness to take the seals of the Home Office; but to leave the lead to Lord Castlereagh he absolutely refused. Even while asserting this determination he could hardly conceal his own judgment of it. His words to Lord Liverpool were, "With respect to what is called the lead of the House of Commons I heartily wish that it had never been mentioned at all: it is no fault of mine that it has been brought forward." Such a statement was beneath his good sense, since it was palpable that by no one but himself could the subject have

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stapleton, who at a subsequent period was Canning's private secretary, and is, therefore, naturally an admitting partisan of his old master, does not conceal his opinion that Canning's original demand and persistency in it were unreasonable. His words are: "Some of Mr. Canning's friends suggested that if he had not the lead, the offer ought not to be accepted. He was not himself of that opinion. . . . There is, however, a letter from Mr. Canning, written about this time to Mr. Wilberforce, and published in his *Life* (iv. 37), which at first sight seems hardly consistent with this version of the transaction, inasmuch as it decidedly defends the course which was adopted. It is evidently, however, not a balancing of arguments on both sides to determine which would preponderate, but a reply to a remonstrance from Mr. Wilberforce against the decision, in order to show that there were abundant reasons to justify it. It having been irrevocably taken, no doubt Mr. Canning at the time pressed into the service everything that could be urged in its favour in order to reconcile it to himself. This seems to be the true solution of the apparent discrepancy." - *George Canning and his Times*, p. 208.



been brought forward, and that, as Lord Castlereagh was actually the leader of the House when the first overtures were made to him, no one but himself could ever have raised the question of displacing him. The letter continues : " But, it having been so brought forward, while I beg, on the one hand, that I may be considered as not claiming it for myself,<sup>1</sup> I cannot, on the other hand, submit to the claim of it for Lord Castlereagh. You know that I say this without the slightest feeling of unkindness towards him. I am ready to act cordially with him on a footing of perfect equality in the House of Commons ; but it is the feeling, not only of my friends, but of every man whom I have consulted, that neither my public character and reputation (the only means through which a man can be useful in high office), nor the interests of the Prince Regent's service well understood, will allow of my consenting to enter the Government on the condition of acting *under* Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons." It almost amounted to a misrepresentation to speak of "the claim of the lead for Lord Castlereagh," when he had already been for several weeks in possession of it. And if this letter showed a lingering personal jealousy of Lord Castlereagh, a second letter, written on the very same day, betrays that feeling still more unmistakeably ; for it offered to consent to a plan which he understood Lord Liverpool to have hinted, of "leaving the lead in abeyance as between Lord Castlereagh and himself ; in the hands of neither ; but in those of Vansittart as Chancellor of the Exchequer ;" adding, that he "suggested this not as a perfect arrangement, or as one that *he* desired, but merely as a facility on his part towards the solution of a difficulty which he believed Lord Liverpool to be

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that Stapleton, speaking afterwards from Canning's own information, says that he did claim the lead for himself. His words are : " Some of Mr. Canning's friends suggested that, if he had not the lead, the offer ought not to be accepted. . . . They decided that he ought to insist upon the lead." But this letter seems to show that Stapleton must have been mistaken.

anxious to solve." It seems strange that a man who was so resolute in refusing to act under Lord Castlereagh, should have been willing to act under Mr. Vansittart. But he was so eager to assert his equality with Lord Castlereagh that he overlooked the humiliating position in which Lord Castlereagh would be placed if the lead were taken from him to be given to a minister whose admission to Cabinet office was so much more recent than his own.

Lord Liverpool perceived that some of Canning's pertinacity arose from his adoption of the idea that possession of the lead by one minister implied a subordination in the rest; and he tried to remove that impression by the following letter, which, besides its value as a most perspicuous definition of the duties and positions of the different ministers in their respective Houses of Parliament, affords also an admirable example of the patient temper and courteous consideration for others which were such distinguished attributes of his character:

Fife House, July 22d, 1812.

MY DEAR CANNING,

As I must on every account be desirous not to be misunderstood with respect to the substance of the communications which have lately passed between us, I am anxious once more to call your attention to those communications, and to bring before you the proposition which I made to you, and the grounds on which I conceived it to rest.

In proposing the arrangement that Lord Castlereagh should take the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the management of the general business of the House of Commons, and that you should take the office of Foreign Secretary of State, which he was willing to relinquish in your favour, I considered myself as proposing the arrangement which was likely to be most advantageous to the Prince's Government and to the public service, most honorable to the parties; and most likely, from being definite, to provide against any unpleasant collisions in future.

I considered it most advantageous to the public service, because in any case two-thirds, at least, of the business of the House

of Commons must be conducted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the nature of his office.

This is the office, therefore, to which the management of the general business most properly belongs.

The office of Foreign Secretary of State will always give to the person who holds it a degree of consequence in Parliament and the country which perhaps belongs to no other department; and so far are the duties of it from being connected with the management of the general business of the House of Commons, that, considering the great detail of that business, and the time which it occupies, the separation of it from the duties of the Foreign Office is in all respects a more convenient arrangement.

I considered it as most honorable to the parties concerned, because Lord Castlereagh was willing, on a principle of accommodation, to resign the office of higher rank, of larger emoluments, and more particularly the office which was considered by others, as well as by himself, as the most agreeable in the Government, from the description of business which belonged to it, in exchange for a situation in all respects very different. If you admitted what is called the lead in the House of Commons in him, you admitted it not on any principle of superiority, but because you might naturally be of opinion that it was most conveniently connected with the department which he would then hold. You obtained in return every advantage in point of office, and you obtained particularly the office which was most congenial to your habits, to your feelings, and to your talents.

I considered it, lastly, as most likely to provide against any unpleasant collisions in future, not from any apprehension that such collision would be likely to exist in your case rather than in any other, but from a general feeling that, in the relation in which you were to be placed in the House of Commons, it must be an advantage that your respective duties should be marked out, as far as it is practicable.

If you were both Secretaries of State, with any third person Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the debates are to depend principally upon the Secretaries of State, it is scarcely possible that there should not be continual difficulties as to the person

to whom any particular business should belong ; and the public service would suffer in consequence. But in the supposed case, the office and situation would sufficiently distinguish the duties, though each must, of course, look for support from the other in the business which properly belonged to him.

In the former part of this letter, as well as in one which I wrote to you from Coombe, I have made use of the term "management of the business of the House of Commons" rather than the term "lead," and I have purposely avoided the words "acting under."

I am satisfied that the term made use of by me is a more correct description of the idea, and that the latter terms have created a very unfair prejudice in the minds of some persons. In my view of this subject I am very anxious that there should be no misunderstanding on this head.

I mean by management of the general business of a House of Parliament the same management which Mr. Perceval had in the House of Commons during the Duke of Portland's Administration, the same which I myself had in the House of Lords during Mr. Pitt's, the Duke of Portland's, and Perceval's Administration. I never considered it as giving me any authority over my colleagues, though I certainly considered myself entitled to their cordial support in all the business which devolved upon me in consequence of that situation. They took the lead of me (if the term is to be used) in the business of their respective departments, and I felt myself always bound to give them the same support in the business of their department as I expected from them on other occasions.

There never has existed a single difficulty between myself and any of my colleagues, as to our respective Parliamentary duties, in the course of the eight years during which I have been in this situation ; and I do not believe that any difficulty ever occurred between Perceval and his colleagues in this respect, whatever might have arisen out of other circumstances.

I have maturely considered every other suggestion for the extension of the Government, and I am satisfied that the one which I have proposed is the only one which is at this time practicable, or would furnish the chance of an united Administration.

If, upon consideration, you should be disposed to agree to this

as a basis, I have only to repeat what I have already stated to you in conversation, that the offices of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Secretary to Ireland, Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland, and the office of Treasurer of the Navy, besides another office, which I avoid mentioning at present, will be disposable for the purpose of making other arrangements; and I should hope, therefore, that there would be the means of providing for your friends in a manner which would be perfectly satisfactory to you and to them, as well as to all those with whom I am acting at present.—I am faithfully yours,

LIVERPOOL.

A subsequent letter placed the matter in a point of view still more favorable to Canning's pretensions, since it showed that, so far from his being required to act *under* Lord Castlereagh, he would be placed in a position of complete independence as to the business of his own department, if it may not even be said that on that Lord Castlereagh would be bound to defer to his judgment.

*Private.*

Fife House, July 23d, 1812.

MY DEAR CANNING,

It may be material that you should be informed, that though I wrote the letter which you received from me yesterday without any previous communication with Lord Castlereagh, I have since shown it to him, and he entirely concurs in my view of the relation in which you would stand to each other under the proposed arrangement, viz.: in consequence of his undertaking the management of the general business of Government in the House of Commons, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, you would stand, in regard to him, in the same relation in which you stood with respect to Perceval in the Duke of Portland's Administration, and in which Lord Wellesley stood to me in the last Administration.

The management of the business of the Foreign Department which might come before the House of Commons would, of course, rest with yourself; and Lord Castlereagh would be bound to act with respect to you on the business of that depart-

ment, as you would have to act with respect to him on the business which his situation devolved upon him.

Lord Castlereagh is not disposed to advance any claim whatever of supremacy. He only wished to be placed in the situation in which other Chancellors of the Exchequer have been placed in those instances in which the management of the general business of the House of Commons has been entrusted to them, and when the First Lord of the Treasury has been in the House of Lords.

I have only to add that if, upon consideration, your answer should be a rejection, I can only regret it. If you think proper to seek by letter any further explanation, which I trust will not be necessary, I wish, in that case, that you would not commit yourself to any particular expressions on the subject without previous communication with me.

Ever, my dear Canning,

Very sincerely yours,

LIVERPOOL.

It might have been thought that enough had now been offered to appease the most punctilious asserter of his own dignity. Canning, however, was still unsatisfied. He persisted in claiming such an equality with Lord Castlereagh as in his judgment every one must discern to be a complete equality, though in the eyes of every one else it would have amounted to a stronger assertion of Lord Castlereagh's inferiority than even the placing of the complete lead in Canning's hands; for, under the guise of a submission to the original theory of the Secretaryship of State, so obsolete that few people were aware of it, it went to curtail the lead of more than half its authority; and the cases on which he rested as precedents to show that the Secretary of State had had the management of the business of the House of Commons oftener than the Chancellor of the Exchequer had but little bearing on the case, since they were cases where the Chancellor of the Exchequer was wholly inexperienced in the usages of Parliament at all, as were Mr. Pitt in 1782, and Lord H. Petty in 1806,

or wholly incompetent, as was Lord J. Cavendish ; besides that in 1806 Fox was in reality the chief minister as much as the elder Pitt had been in 1757. In all such cases the precedent which is really of authority must be the latest ; and the latest Canning admitted to be against him ; and that with his own submission to it. Long as the letter is, it is fair to him to give it at full length, and equally fair to add Lord Castlereagh's explanation of his own views and feelings on the subject, with Lord Liverpool's reply to Canning, not written without unusual deliberation.

*Private.*

Gloucester Lodge, July 25th, 1812.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I have fully considered your letter of the 22d, and the two supplementary letters which I have since received from you.

I proceed to state to you, as clearly as I can, my final view of the proposition which you have made to me.

I begin by repeating what I have already expressed to you, both verbally and in writing, my readiness to act cordially with Lord Castlereagh on a footing of equality in the House of Commons.

I understand, from your letters, that no superiority is claimed for Lord Castlereagh.

I understand from you that what is ordinarily called the "lead," what you (more correctly perhaps) term the management of the general business of the House of Commons, is proposed to be separated from the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and annexed to that of Chancellor of the Exchequer, as an arrangement more convenient for the public service ; and that it is thought to be more convenient, both because by far the greatest portion of that business must, at all events, under any arrangement, fall into the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and because the Foreign Secretary of State will be the better able to discharge the duties of his own department in office by being relieved from details in the House of Commons with which his office has no necessary or natural connexion.

Now there has been no instance, as I believe, except that of Perceval in the Duke of Portland's time, in which the management of the general business of the House of Commons has



been given to a Chancellor of the Exchequer *not* First Lord of the Treasury. The general rule has been to give it to a Secretary of State. However just, therefore, the reasoning may be by which the proposed arrangement may be recommended, it is not to be disguised that a certain priority is allotted by it to that one of two persons of equal pretensions in whose favour the innovation is established.

On the other hand, I must in fairness admit that Lord Castlereagh has, as you say, relinquished in my favour an office of higher official rank, and one of which the business is peculiarly agreeable to me.

Thus far we are probably quite agreed.

I am sure, however, that you will feel with me that any arrangement which shall have the effect of disparaging me in public estimation, by exhibiting me as subordinate to Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons, would be, through that disparagement (so far as I am capable of rendering any service at all), prejudicial to the Prince Regent's service ; and I am still more sure that you feel (for you have stated that feeling repeatedly in your first letter) that an arrangement which, "by being definite, should be most likely to provide against future collision," and "which should mark out our respective duties in the House of Commons as nearly as is practicable," would be highly desirable and advantageous.

Upon these principles it is impossible for me to agree to the proposal in your last letter for leaving everything relating to division of business in the House of Commons to be settled hereafter by reference to the head of the Government, as each particular case may arise. This would be not to define, but to avoid definition ; it would not be to prevent collision, but to invite, and almost to ensure it. The suggestion of following "what has been *usual* in similar cases" does not help us at all.

In all former instances (within our memory) : in that of Mr. Fox and Lord John Cavendish ; of Mr. Pitt (when Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Shelburne) and Lord Sydney, then Mr. Townshend ; of Mr. Fox and Lord Henry Petty and Lord Howick : the management has been with the Secretary of State. Such is the general rule. I have admitted Lord Castlereagh's voluntary relinquishment of the Secretaryship of State to entitle

him to a departure from the general rule in the present instance. I do not, however, think that it justifies the complete inversion of the rule.

In Mr. Pitt's second and third Administrations he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer only, but Prime Minister. No inference whatever can be drawn, therefore, from his relative situation with Lord Grenville (when Secretary of State in the House of Commons) or with Mr. Dundas and Mr. Windham.

In the Duke of Portland's last Administration the distribution was between *three* persons of equal pretensions, two of them being Secretaries of State and agreeing to allow the precedence to the third as Chancellor of the Exchequer: originally, perhaps, for the very purpose of preventing competition between themselves. There is, therefore, no case exactly "similar," much less any series of cases from which *usage* could be collected.

To say that I should stand towards Lord Castlereagh as I did towards Perceval in the Duke of Portland's time is incorrect in a double view: first, as Perceval's precedence was to a certain degree the result of a compromise between Castlereagh and me; secondly, as by proposing to confine my management to my own department alone, and assigning to Lord Castlereagh the management of all the remainder, you place me, not as I stood towards Perceval, but as towards Perceval and Lord Castlereagh in one.

I have been, as you know, perfectly ready now to stand again with Lord Castlereagh in the same situation in which he and I stood towards Perceval towards any third person, if such person could now be found. This arrangement you tell me is impracticable. One of your main objections to it is that, if Lord Castlereagh and I were both Secretaries of State, it would be scarcely possible that continual difficulties should not arise as to the division of business between us. Is it not obvious that, if this be so, precisely the same difficulties must arise when Lord Castlereagh, though Chancellor of the Exchequer, assumes the management of all the business of the other two Secretaries of State?

Out of this consideration a very simple arrangement suggests itself, which I really think would place us on a footing of fair and liberal equality. The office of Secretary of State is, in

constitution, *one* office, though divided, for public convenience, usually into *two*, or, as now, into three departments. Of the heads of these departments each can do, and does, the business of the other, upon occasion, as matter of course, without any new or special appointment : so much so that it *might* happen, according to your projected division of duties in the House of Commons, that I might sign despatches at the Home or War Department (upon occasion of a vacancy, or an absence, or an indisposition), for which despatches I should be personally responsible, but which Lord Castlereagh, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, would have to explain and justify to the House of Commons.

The arrangement which I would propose, therefore, is conformable, if not to *usage* (which is not applicable to the case), but to analogy. It is that, as things now stand, and so long as I am sole Secretary of State in the House of Commons, I should act there, not as Secretary of State for the Foreign Department only, but that I should be understood to have the management of all business proceeding out of either department of the Secretary of State's office ; and Lord Castlereagh of everything else. This would be clear, "definite," and simple. It would carry the established distinction of office fairly into Parliament, and would mark the boundaries of duty there with a plainness not to be mistaken.

Leaving the Chancellor of the Exchequer the management of the business of every other department, in addition to his natural province of Finance and Revenue ; leaving him the business of Navy, Ordnance, Army (over, or together with, the Secretary at War), of Judicature, of Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures, of India, with its charter (one great business, if not *the* business, of the ensuing session), of the new Civil List establishment (probably not very distant, and sure to be of itself the most important transaction of the time in which it is brought on), and generally of all that mass of undefinable business which grows up in the House of Commons, it can hardly be thought that the magnitude and varieties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's occupations will be unreasonably, or even perceptibly, impaired by this arrangement.

The principle once acknowledged, I should not, as you may

readily believe, be very jealous of its application in cases where, from the intermixture of the business of the Home or Colonial Department (as may sometimes happen) with that or some other department under the cognisance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the whole conduct of it might be more conveniently in his hands, or in those of some person acting in aid of him. And upon the whole of what I had to do myself I should desire the most constant and unreserved communication with him.

It is the acknowledgment of the principle that I desire, as one of fair and *stateable* equality; and I desire it not as matter of punctilio, but for the very reasons which you give for the desirableness of definite arrangement, because I think this principle not only likely to meet all ordinary cases, but almost certain to serve as a rule even for any extraordinary or anomalous case that may arise, and so prevent all doubts, disunions, and appeals.

If this principle be distinctly acknowledged, I will no longer withhold my consent to your proposition, so far as I am myself concerned in it; supposing always that the arrangements in which others are comprehended shall be settled to mutual satisfaction.

I am, dear Liverpool,

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S. Upon looking over your letters again, I think it right to add that, desirous as I shall be to co-operate cordially with Lord Castlereagh, I must take for granted that, when you speak of the support which we are to look for from each other, you do not mean to look for a constant daily and nightly attendance from *me* on every stage of every measure which he may have to bring forward; or that my occasional absence from those detailed and protracted discussions which must interfere with my official occupations would ever be considered as indicating any want of cordiality towards him. Perceval and I understood each other perfectly on this point; and the principle upon which you place the separation of *the lead*, or management, from the Foreign Office, is itself so clear a recognition of it, that I need not, perhaps, have said anything upon it, if I had

not thought it better to leave nothing unexplained that could be in any way liable to misunderstanding hereafter.

St. James's Square, 26th July, 1812.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

Having reflected upon Mr. Canning's letter, and the conversation which passed between us upon it, I deem it material, in order to guard against future misconception, to trouble you with my sentiments upon it.

The distribution of business therein proposed appears to me formed upon an assumption that no general management of the business, or *lead*, as it has usually been called, is to exist as heretofore in the House of Commons, (I use not the word *lead* in the invidious sense of superiority, which I am perfectly ready to disclaim, but in the practical and parliamentary sense of that expression), but that such an arrangement of business should be made as may be consistent with the equality therein contended for. In this principle I cannot possibly acquiesce, being satisfied that some *one* person must be charged with the general management of the business of the House of Commons, who is understood, in that situation, to possess the confidence of the minister, and on whom shall devolve, as a matter of course, subject to arrangements of special convenience or accommodation, the conduct of all business which does not belong to departments the chiefs of which are in the House of Commons. When the alternative was proposed to me, as the means of procuring Mr. Canning's accession to the Government, of either preserving, as it is called, "the lead" in the House of Commons, with the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, or, if I preferred it, the Foreign Department without the lead, I considered that arrangement as one perfectly intelligible, and to be understood in its ordinary and accustomed sense. When I met Mr. Canning at your house, I expressly stated to him that I could not recede from my situation in the House of Commons, but that I was ready, as I had expressed myself to you some time before, to open the Foreign Office for him, if he preferred it to the Secretaryship of State for the War Department, which I understood, with Lord Bathurst's sanction, you had proposed to him.

To this arrangement I adhere, because I con-

accommodation to Mr. Canning not involving any breach of the accustomed principles of Parliamentary business. I declined to acquiesce in what was called "the lead being in abeyance," because it appeared to me an entirely new and impracticable principle, calculated to destroy all unity of action in the Government, and to throw the House of Commons into disorder. I cannot now agree to a distribution of business which appears to me calculated to effect the same purpose under a different name. I must adhere to the proposition you brought under my consideration, interpreted and limited in its fair Parliamentary sense, and must decline being a party to any stipulation which is to alter the character of the situation in which it was proposed to me to stand, and for the execution of whose duties I cannot consent to make myself responsible, if I am not understood to be charged not only with the functions, but supported with the authority and influence essential to their effectual execution.

In the conduct of public business my feelings would always lead me to accommodate to the fair wishes of a colleague ; and if Mr. Canning should be desirous of bringing forward the business of Lord Bathurst's office, so far as it connects itself with foreign affairs, such an arrangement, as far as I am personally concerned, would be cheerfully acquiesced in by me ; but I cannot agree to it as a matter of previous stipulation, much less as a principle which is to alter the general relations of office, or to give to any change of office a character inconsistent with the avowed grounds, on which it was originally proposed and acquiesced in by me.

With respect to Mr. Canning's attendance in the House of Commons, I should hope it would be regulated upon those principles which have always influenced the conduct of members of a Government acting cordially together.

I am, dear Liverpool,

Ever faithfully yours,

CASTLEREAGH.

Fife House, July 27th, 1812.

MY DEAR CANNING,

I have very attentively considered your answer to my letter. As the opinions contained in my former letters have not undergone



any change, I think it would be unnecessary to enter into further particulars respecting them.

I cannot depart from the principle laid down in those letters, that the management of the general business of the House of Commons should rest with Lord Castlereagh, as it was understood to exist in the hands of Mr. Perceval during the Duke of Portland's Administration.

It is perfectly true that the business which will devolve upon Lord Castlereagh in consequence of there being only one Secretary of State in the House of Commons will be far more extensive than that which devolved on Mr. Perceval; and, though no previous stipulation can be made which would have the appearance of altering the character of Lord Castlereagh's situation, yet if you are desirous of bringing forward in the House of Commons that part of the business in the War Department which is connected with the Foreign Office, I am confident that there will be no difficulty in accommodating you in this respect.

With respect to the postscript of your letter, I will say no more upon it than that I trust your attendance in the House of Commons will always be regulated by those principles which have influenced the conduct of the members of a Government acting cordially together. Believe me, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

Lord Castlereagh's letter was read by Lord Liverpool to Canning, and afterwards lent to him for further consideration, with the announcement of an additional offer on Castlereagh's part, which will be best understood by the following letter :

July 27th, 1812.

MY DEAR CANNING,

I have communicated to Castlereagh what passed between us to-day on the subject of what may be the pretensions of the Secretary of State when there was only one in the House of Commons, and when the management of the general business of Government in that House was considered to be in the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He will not object to whatever has been *usual* in this respect in similar cases, and if the practice has been various, or is on other accounts doubtful, he



will be satisfied to abide by whatever may be the opinion of the person who may at the time be at the head of the Government, after such friendly communication as may be had upon the subject between the parties interested in the business.

Yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

It might have been thought almost impossible to refuse the offer thus made : but as if the very moderation of Lord Castlereagh had been irritating, it made or left Canning more pertinacious than ever. Conciliatory and even yielding as Lord Castlereagh's letter had been, he found offence in the very terms in which Lord Castlereagh had expressed his anxiety to comply substantially with his wishes. The following note shows the degree in which, during the course of the discussion, his natural eagerness of temper had been goaded into cavilling captiousness by the advisers to whom he was unfortunately listening :

*Private.*

Gloucester Lodge, July 27th, 1812.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I return Lord Castlereagh's letter. I had not imagined it, upon your reading it over to me this morning, to be half so strong and so precise as upon reading it and considering it myself I find it to be. Nor would my apprehensions, perhaps, have been awakened about it at all (conceiving your subsequent agreement to supersede whatever might previously have passed between Lord Castlereagh and you in any previous discussion), had I not heard of the existence of this letter, after I left you, in a way which leaves me little doubt that I may hear of it often again.

With this letter in existence, and uncontradicted, I cannot consider any such agreement as was made with you at all satisfactory. Lord Castlereagh would always be at liberty to say that he had positively refused to acquiesce in a "principle of equality" between us, upon which alone I can consent to act, and which I thought might be attained as well by mutual compromise as by precise parity of situation. He will always be at liberty to say that he positively refused to consent to that arrangement as a "previous stipulation," which, if it be not

matter of stipulation on my part (as alone I would take it), must be matter of grace and favour on his.

The result is, I am afraid, that nothing can be made of our attempts, sincere on my part, I assure you, and I firmly believe on yours, to reconcile *my* claim of equality with *his* of pre-eminence; and I have therefore only to repeat that, after considering this letter, I feel more strongly than ever that I will not go into the House of Commons *under* Lord Castlereagh. Ever, my dear Liverpool,

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S. I will write to Wellesley to desire to see him before he obeys Lord Sidmouth's summons.

The discussion was thus finally closed. The only subsequent letter from Canning on the subject which appears among Lord Liverpool's papers is written in a friendly tone, expressing his "great unwillingness that any personal point of honour of his own, however insuperable, should stand in the way of the public service," and assuring him therefore that "if there were any among those persons who would have come into office with himself whose assistance Lord Liverpool was still desirous of obtaining, he would labour to induce them to accept any proposals, not dishonorable to themselves, which Lord Liverpool might think proper to make to them, as sincerely as if he were himself able to make a part of the Government."

St. James's Square, 29th July, 1812.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

Considering the negotiation with Mr. Canning is now closed, I should not trouble you with any remarks upon his last letter if it had not referred (in my conception unjustly) to the *tone of mine*, which I am wholly unconscious to have been such as unnecessarily to aggravate the evident difficulties of the subject to which it related; much less was it intended to affect, in the slightest degree, Mr. Canning's feelings; and, as I understood, its primary impression was not of that nature.

That letter was written to obviate further misconception, in cor-

sequence of my having seen two letters from Mr. Canning, which required, as the condition of his coming into the Government, that I should in substance relinquish my present situation in the House of Commons, for the purpose of placing the conduct of business in that House upon a principle which never has been at any former period, and, in my deliberate judgment, never ought to be acted upon, either with a view to the credit of the individual members of the Administration, or to the interests of the public service.

I felt myself called upon to decline any such arrangement, as soon as it was proposed, first on public grounds, as necessarily leading to weakness and disunion ; and, secondly, from a sense of character, being satisfied that Mr. Canning, under similar circumstances, would not, and, I must add, ought not, to have acceded to such an arrangement, if proposed by me. With these impressions, I was anxious that Mr. Canning and myself should not be exposed to act together under different conceptions of our respective duties.

I wish not to be understood as offering the slightest allusion against the propriety of Mr. Canning's conduct ; he has no doubt been guided by feelings to which I am ready to do the utmost justice. If upon reflection I entertain any doubt with respect to the course I have myself pursued, it is rather that I have gone too far, than not far enough, in the spirit of accommodation, from a desire to meet the wishes of my colleagues, to strengthen the Prince Regent's Government, and from a sense of dutiful deference to what appear to be the personal sentiments of his Royal Highness.

Whatever the obstacles may be which prevent Mr. Canning and myself from being brought to act together in the Administration, under an arrangement satisfactory to our mutual feelings, there is no reason why they should be a subject of complaint or irritation on either side. From the outset my disposition was to interpose no obstacle which a sense of character did not dictate to your endeavours to effect an arrangement which might be advantageous to the public service. I have endeavoured faithfully to execute this purpose : I lament that any impediment should exist, at a period of acknowledged public difficulty, in strengthening the Administration : more especially

that this impediment should in any degree arise from considerations personal to myself. I should deem it, however, a source of weakness, and not of strength, to the Prince Regent's Government, were I to make a part of an arrangement, which was novel upon the face of it, founded in appearance, if not in fact, on feelings of jealousy and personal competition, and to which, for the reasons assigned, I could not accede without a violation of public principle and a sacrifice of my own feelings and character.

I am, dear Liverpool,

Ever faithfully yours,

CASTLEREAGH.

This final letter of Lord Castlereagh has been given to show the generosity with which he was eager to make every allowance for Canning's personal feelings; though he was aware that they originated rather in the suggestions of others than the dictates of his own judgment. And it is due to Canning also to add that, after the negotiation was thus terminated, he did not allow the soreness which he can hardly have helped feeling at its failure to influence his conduct towards the Administration, but afforded it a frank and hearty support. But he had made a great mistake. When, half a century before, the great statesman of that day was prevailed on, in a somewhat similar manner, to refuse office which his conscience admonished him that he was bound to accept, he could not forbear reproaching his adviser in the mild form of a classical quotation,<sup>1</sup> that he had irreparably damaged the reputation and interest of both, and had at the same time inflicted no trifling injury on their common country. Canning might certainly have lamented his own submission to the fatal influence of his counsellors with as much justice as Lord Chatham; they kept him from power at a time when a crisis was rapidly approaching which placed within the

<sup>1</sup> He apostrophised Lord Temple in the words of Anna to the dying Dido :

“Exstincti me teque, soror, populumque, patresque  
Sidonios, urbemque tuam.”—Æn. iv. 682.

reach of those who were in authority such glory as has fallen to the lot of few Administrations. And it was only through an accident which no one could foresee, and which he himself lamented as deeply as any one, that after many years the opportunity which he now so weakly and capriciously threw away was re-opened to him. But the end of Lord Chatham's quotation is not applicable to his case. His refusal, which left to Lord Castlereagh the conduct of our foreign affairs, cannot be said to have been unfortunate for the country. The three years which ensued were perhaps the most important as far as our foreign policy was concerned that are recorded in our history. Our Secretary of State was required not merely to negotiate with the diplomatists of other lands, but to guide, to stimulate, to restrain their sovereigns. On his voice depended the settlement of more than one question affecting the peace of the whole world. Lord Castlereagh rose with the demand made upon his abilities. During that most eventful period he displayed alternately every quality which is most required in those invested with great influence. In moments of danger, prompt and fearless decision ; in hours of deliberation, shrewd judgment and keen foresight ; when others were fretful, or exacting, or selfish, he calmed and shamed them by his unfailing equanimity, his unruffled courtesy, his perfect disinterestedness. Nor with the worshippers of heraldic punctilio, among whom the negotiations at Vienna were carried on, were his social advantages, his high rank in the most real nobility of Europe, without their weight. The consideration which these external circumstances gave him with Metternich and Hardenberg was more than once sufficiently apparent. And it may well be doubted whether Alexander, who chafed sufficiently under his frank expostulations and fearless reproofs, would have tolerated such language at all had it proceeded from one on whom the advantages of birth and hereditary importance had been less freely showered. Canning's partisans may believe that he whom

they admired might have equalled him in ability : taking all the circumstances together, flattery itself could not venture to expect that he could have surpassed him.

The whole transaction had been full of great vexation and disappointment to Lord Liverpool, though it is probable that he did not greatly regret the release from the obligation to give places to Canning's adherents ; and in one instance he was able to fill up an office which had been offered to one of them much more to his satisfaction : the post of Secretary for Ireland. It had been occupied by Lord Wellesley's brother, Mr. Wellesley Pole, in later days known as Lord Maryborough, who had already signified his wish to resign, and was only retaining his office till the negotiation with Canning should be concluded. The Prime Minister now made his retirement the opportunity of introducing into public life a young man who had but recently entered Parliament, but who, during the short time that he had enjoyed a seat in the House of Commons, had done much to realize the expectations that he had already created by a distinguished University career. And he announced his intention to the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond, in the following letter, which does great credit to his own power of discrimination and insight into character :

*Private.*

Fife House, August 1st, 1812. .

MY DEAR DUKE,

I desired Lord Bathurst a few days ago to inform you that, if certain negotiations, which were then depending, and of which you were informed, should prove unsuccessful, it was my intention to propose the situation of Secretary to Ireland to Mr. Peel. I have now to acquaint you that I have proposed it to him by the authority of the Prince Regent, and that he has accepted it. I can speak with more confidence of Mr. Peel than I could of most persons to whom such an office might be offered. He has been under me in the Secretary of State's office for two years, and has acquired all the necessary habits of official business. He has a particularly good temper, and great frank-

ness and openness of manners, which I know are particularly desirable on your side of the water. He acquired great reputation, as you must have heard, as a scholar at Oxford, and he has distinguished himself in the House of Commons on every occasion on which he has had an opportunity of speaking. I have the greatest hopes, therefore, that this appointment will prove acceptable to you and advantageous to the Government.

With respect to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am inclined to think that Mr. Leslie Foster will be the best selection; but I defer any final determination upon this for a few days.

I am, with sincere regards,

Yours, &c.

*To the DUKE OF RICHMOND.*

LIVERPOOL.

From the language of another letter it might be fancied that he already foresaw the future eminence of the new Secretary. While lamenting the failure of his efforts "to bring Castlereagh and Canning together as members of the present Government," and expressing that he consequently "had had no resource but to bring forward the most promising of the young men, on whose exertions the fate of the Government in the House of Commons another session would very much depend," he adds, "I should be most happy to see another Pitt amongst them. I would most willingly resign the government into his hands, for I am fully aware of the importance of the minister being, if possible, in the House of Commons;" and proceeds to describe his own feelings and desires in words which strikingly show his own unselfish patriotism: "I can assure you I never sought the situation in which I find myself placed; but, having accepted it from a sense of public duty, I am determined to do my utmost for the service of the Prince Regent as long as I have reason to believe I possess his confidence; and at all events I will endeavour to keep that party together which affords the only security either to the Crown or to the people against the complete and uncontrolled dominion of the Opposition."



The appointment, however, of Mr. Peel was perhaps the only one which was entirely to Lord Liverpool's mind. And it was thus, amid difficulties of no ordinary character, that he entered on his Administration. At his very first acceptance of office it had been condemned by the House of Commons as unequal to the greatness of the occasion ; and the general opinion of Parliament, of the country, and of many even of his own colleagues, certainly was that it wanted strength. It had unquestionably sustained a diminution of strength from the notoriety of the failure of the negotiations with Canning, and probably during its first years no one augured for it a long existence. Yet from this unpromising beginning it became a powerful, successful Ministry, and permanent, with but two exceptions,<sup>1</sup> beyond all former example. It terminated with unprecedented success and glory the greatest war in which the country had ever been engaged. With equally signal success, it grappled with and crushed its unexpected revival. The return of peace and the inevitable reaction brought with it domestic dangers almost as violent, almost as enduring, as the war itself. These also it surmounted, and, amid circumstances of great and universal financial distress, laid the foundation of that wonderful commercial prosperity which for the last forty years has been the most distinguishing feature of our national history. Such achievements and results supersede the necessity of panegyric. And, as they could have been accomplished by none but men of great practical ability, so also is it clear that they could not have been accomplished even by them if their chief had not been a statesman whom all respected for his capacity, and to whom all were attached by his uniform consideration for all.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Walpole's and Mr. Pitt's.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The United States declare war—The Orders in Council—The right of search—Conciliatory conduct of Mr. Perceval on this subject—Mr. Brougham's motion on the subject—Toleration Bill—Lord Liverpool's feelings towards Dissenters—Riots of the Luddites—Fresh proposals of Napoleon for negotiation—Lord Liverpool's language on Napoleon's title—The battle of Salamanca—The battle of Borodino—Lord Liverpool's comments on the state of affairs—Slight influence of the Government on elections—The new House of Commons favorable to the Ministers—Mr. Peel's view of the state of Ireland.

THE arrangements for the new Ministry were hardly completed, when their attention was called to a matter of paramount importance, on which it was believed that the question of peace and war with the United States depended. It afterwards appeared that nothing that could have been done since Lord Liverpool became Prime Minister could have affected the result; since, while Lord Wellesley's negotiations were going on, the American House of Representatives came to a vote in favour of war, and actually declared it on the very day on which the subject was first mentioned in the House of Lords.

The pretext by which the Americans justified their recourse to hostilities was the Order or Orders in Council issued by the Duke of Portland's Administration, which were in fact only a formal assertion of the principle adopted by Mr. Fox in 1806, when he and his colleagues established the coasting blockade. As has been already mentioned,<sup>1</sup> they had been drawn up and established to

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 240. Mr. Brougham, in the debate of June 16, 1812, expressly admits that this species of blockade, first devised in May 1806, was "the first step to the famous Orders in Council."

retaliate on the French for the arrogance of Napoleon's Berlin decrees; but they were in reality felt less by that nation than by the neutral Powers, or rather by that one neutral Power, the United States of America, which, previously to their enactment, had nearly engrossed the carrying trade, but which now found that source of profit almost wholly cut off. It is quite clear that these Orders were indefensible on any acknowledged principle of national law, since they professed to establish a blockade of ports of which not a single ship was stationed to guard the entrance. But our navy was powerful enough to override all considerations of that kind, and captured ship after ship of the Americans freighted with cargoes destined for French consumption. The Americans expostulated; but, when their remonstrances failed to procure them relief, they began to consider whether they could not, in their turn, retaliate on us as we had retaliated on the French, and passed a law known as the Non-Intercourse Act, by which they prohibited all commerce between their merchants and either of the belligerent Powers. France was nominally included, because it was impossible for them to deny that that country had been the aggressor by her Berlin decrees; but France suffered no practical damage, since we had destroyed all her trade long before. The Act was only effective as regarded us, and against us it was a weapon of great power, since our trade with America had latterly become of great magnitude and value. For many of our manufactures she was, even in time of peace, almost our best customer; and, since France had armed the Continent against us, there was no such market for most of our produce as was furnished by the growing population of the United States.

It was, of course, an act of great self-denial on the part of the Americans thus to break off a commerce which was as profitable to them as to ~~themselves~~ <sup>themselves</sup>, and to resolve to dispense with luxuries and ~~articles~~ <sup>articles</sup> which had become almost necessities. But th ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> yet entirely forgotten

the animosities kindled by the war of 1775. The feeling had been revived in all its first intensity by the loss of their trade ; and, though they had wrought themselves up to think any inconvenience or distress to themselves repaid by the probability of inflicting still greater injury upon us, they did not the less writhe under the diminution of their public and private wealth. Another source of mutual irritation had arisen from a claim which we asserted to search American ships for deserters from our navy, of whom it was no secret that numbers were serving in them ; while the Americans denied the right, and resented the exercise of it (on which our captains were instructed to insist) so warmly that in more than one instance their officers had endeavoured to provoke ours into acts of warlike hostility. On both these subjects negotiations had been for some time going on between the two countries, which our ministers long hoped to bring to a satisfactory conclusion. But a few days after the death of Mr. Perceval intelligence arrived of a law having been adopted by the American House of Representatives that breathed a spirit of such frantic and unreasoning animosity against Great Britain as was calculated to extinguish all hope of the preservation of peace in all but the most sanguine bosoms.<sup>1</sup> That our statesmen were bent on peace, if it could be maintained without loss of the national honour, abundant proof was supplied by the circumstance that on the 23d of April, almost the same day on which this famous bill was introduced into the

<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of April a bill was introduced, and rapidly carried, "for the protection, recovery, and identification of American seamen ;" the first clause of which declared that "Every person who, under pretence of a commission from any foreign Power, should impress upon the high seas any native seaman of the United States, should be adjudged a pirate and a felon, and upon conviction should suffer death." While another clause gave to every such seaman impressed under the British flag the right of attaching in the hands of any British subject, or of any debtor of any British subject, a sum equal to thirty dollars per month during the time of his detention. ("Annual Register," 1812, p. 195.)

American Congress, the Prince Regent had issued a declaration revoking the Order in Council as far as concerned American vessels and cargoes. It is true that the revocation was in a certain degree conditional. It was to take effect from the 1st of August; and was stated in the preamble to have been caused in part by a decree issued during the past year by the French Government revoking the Berlin decrees in respect of shipping belonging to the United States; which it was understood was likely to lead to a repeal on the part of the United States of the Non-Intercourse Act as far as France was concerned; and it was at the same time expressed in the Regent's declaration that, unless the American Government should revoke also their exclusion of British vessels, whether merchantmen or men-of-war, from their harbours, so as to place them on the same footing with the ships of France, the revocation should be annulled, and the Orders in Council should resume their operation.

Conditional in form as such a declaration was, it could not be denied that in practical effect it amounted to all that the Americans claimed on the subject, since it rested with themselves alone to render it permanent. Yet the intelligence of its promulgation was utterly disregarded in the United States, and both the Government and Representatives proceeded from one violent resolution and measure to another, till on the 18th of June the President issued a formal declaration of war against Great Britain.

Such a step, however, on his part was far from being anticipated here, when on the 16th of June Mr. Brougham brought forward a motion to address the Prince for an immediate, general, and unconditional suspension or revocation of the Orders. He enforced it by a description of the distress which pervaded our commercial classes of all ranks; while at the same time he contended that the Orders had almost wholly failed to produce the annoyance or injury to France which had been expected from them. Lord Castlereagh, while he affirmed, and indeed proved,

that Mr. Brougham's statements of the sufferings of our manufacturers were exaggerated, and that, even if they had not been, the stagnation of trade which he described was attributable to other causes beside the Orders in Council, declared at the same time that, so desirous was the Government to remove every cause of complaint on which the Americans insisted, that the suspension of the Orders should not be delayed, as had been formerly proposed, till August, but should take place at once, in order that our envoy at Washington might be able to enforce his demand for the repeal of the Non-Intercourse Act by the intelligence that we had already abrogated the decree to which that Act was intended as a reply. Even after he had thus renounced them, Canning, who indeed had been their author, defended the policy of their original issue as a "justifiable measure of retaliation on France." But in the House of Lords Lord Liverpool adopted and justified the policy which Lord Castlereagh had announced, while he steadily rejected the advice of Lord Grey and his party to revoke the Orders unconditionally ; a measure which, in his view, could not be reconciled either to our dignity or to our interests. As we have seen, the decision came too late, or rather the eagerness of the Americans for war frustrated any attempt of ours to preserve peace. But the combination of conciliation and firmness which the conduct of the Government exhibited afforded a good omen of its future policy.

Another indication of the general principles by which the administration of our domestic affairs was to be regulated was furnished by a Toleration Bill, which relieved the Dissenters of all sects from the annoying and vexatious provisions of the Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act, both of which were now repealed, and which placed them in all respects on a footing which they themselves admitted to be satisfactory. Their spokesman in the House of Commons, Mr. W. Smith, truly characterised it as "the most complete Act of Toleration which had been passed in



this country." And, as an evidence of the general feeling of the new Government on the subject of religious liberty, the bill itself, liberal as it was, was hardly more important than the language in which the Prime Minister introduced it to his brother peers, recommending it to them not solely on the ground of the justice of the claims of the Dissenters, but also because "an enlarged and liberal toleration was the best security to the Established Church." The consent of the Archbishop and most of his brethren in the House he had already secured by private discussion. The Archbishop at first had desired to make one or two clauses more stringent; but Lord Liverpool in reply pointed out to him that, as the Government had drawn it, it was exactly "the same in substance as that which regulated the Roman Catholics," and that to grant less "would be inconsistent with his object of carrying through a bill which would be satisfactory to the greater part of the Nonconformists." One of his remarks will probably surprise many of those who look on all Nonconformists as at all times equally hostile to the English Church. The Archbishop had wished to specify "Dissenters" by name, as those to whom the bill applied. On this point, Lord Liverpool writes, "With regard to the insertion of the word 'Dissenters' at the beginning of the clause, it may perhaps have escaped you that the effect of it would be to take the great body of the Methodists entirely out of the operation of the law; and, as the Conventicle Act would be repealed, to relieve them from the necessity of registering their meetings, though the registry in their case is as important as in any other. I should observe that a large proportion of this particular body of men profess to be members of the Church of England. They attend divine service in the church, and take the Communion in the church; but they claim the privilege of meeting and associating for religious purposes in other places and at other times. I am perfectly aware that they require particular attention from all the heads and orthodox members of the Establishment, even from the very circum-



stance of their approximating to the Church itself ; but I doubt very much the policy of any measure which, at any time, and more particularly under the present circumstances, would drive them to become professed Dissenters from the Church of England. I trust, with all their errors, their occasional conformity and their professed assent to the Articles and doctrine of the Church is more advantageous than injurious to the Church itself." And his arguments were so well received, his desire to protect and strengthen the Church itself so universally recognised, and his judgment so generally deferred to, that a few days afterwards he was enabled to announce to Mr. Smith that the bishops would not resist any part of the bill in its existing shape ; though he declined to add to it, as a party among the Non-conformists desired, a clause repealing the Test and Corporation Act, with which the Unitarians seem to have been the body that was most dissatisfied.

One bill which the Government was forced to introduce before the adjournment of Parliament was of a less satisfactory character. Throughout the spring the manufacturing districts had been disturbed by some of the most formidable riots of which there was any record for at least three centuries. Bands of men traversed Nottinghamshire, Cheshire, and the southern districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, breaking open houses, carrying off arms, destroying machinery of all kinds, and in some instances proceeding to most ferocious acts of murder. They gave themselves the name of Luddites, from a poor idiot named Lud, who, in a fit of frenzy, while seeking to wreak his vengeance on some boys who had teased him, had broken some stocking-frames. But there were no symptoms of defective intellect in the operations of his imitators. On the contrary, secret committees, which were appointed by both Houses to investigate the riots and their causes, agreed in reporting them to be the result of a systematic organization, carried on by societies, the members of which were bound by secret oaths ; and, though it was probable that in

some degree they had been caused by the distress arising from want of employment, they affirmed that they owed their origin still more to political motives, and that the rioters were to a great extent tools in the hands of those whose turbulence and disloyalty derived no provocation from poverty. The ordinary powers of the law proved wholly inadequate to deal with an evil which was spreading terror through an extensive district, paralysing trade, and, as far as distress had anything to do with it, aggravating it tenfold. And therefore, two days after the Committee of the Commons presented its report, Lord Castlereagh introduced a bill to invest the Government with authority sufficient to restore tranquillity, which hitherto it did not possess. Formidable as was the mischief with which the bill grappled, the powers for which the Government asked were so moderate as to show, more indisputably than the most elaborate statement, their conviction of their own strength: for not only were the chief enactments of the bill limited to increasing the authority of the magistrates to search for arms, which, if secreted, should be presumed to be intended for unlawful use; to conferring on them a greater power of dispersing tumultuous assemblages, at whatever hour they might be collected; and to enabling magistrates of other counties to act in those in which riots might be taking place; but even this law, preventive and not vindictive as it manifestly was, and mild and full of mercy in its most vigorous operation, was only to extend over a small district, that most infected with and disturbed by this lawless spirit, and was only to last for a very limited time, its expiration being fixed for Lady-day of the next year. And Lord Liverpool, in bringing it forward in the House of Lords, after it had been passed by the Commons, took occasion from this extreme moderation of the proposed enactment to claim general praise for the Administration, and (as Lord Darnley, who opposed the bill, had attacked the Ministry as one which in May had been condemned by the House of Commons) to remind the Peers

that that adverse vote had been practically rescinded by a decisive majority in their favour in a much fuller House. The bill was passed, and proved entirely successful.

The Ministry was also strengthened rather than weakened by a discussion, which was brought on a few days before the prorogation, on an occurrence which had taken place before the recent changes, and during the lifetime of Mr. Perceval. In April Napoleon had made a new proposal to negotiate with a view to the re-establishment of peace, offering on some points terms which bore the appearance of considerable advantage to England, but speaking also "of the actual dynasty of Spain" as one which both Powers were to declare "independent." Lord Castlereagh, who at that time had just become the Foreign Secretary, had replied by a request to know the meaning of the term "actual dynasty." If it meant "that the royal authority of Spain and its Government should be recognised as residing in the brother of the ruler of France, and a Cortes formed under his authority, and not as residing in the legitimate sovereign, Ferdinand VII. . . . the obligations of good faith precluded his Royal Highness from entertaining a proposition founded on such a basis." If, on the contrary, the independence to be acknowledged were that of Ferdinand, the Prince Regent would be prepared to treat. No answer was ever sent to this letter, and in the last week of the session questions in both Houses were put to the Government on the subject. In the House of Commons the ministers had the powerful aid of Sheridan, who, in affairs affecting the national honour, had constantly shown a disposition to prefer patriotism to party, and who now did not hesitate to denounce the French proposal as tricky and perfidious, never intended to lead to peace with us, but only to terrify Russia into submission, lest she should be left single-handed to encounter the storm which was menacing her, and which had since broken upon her. Canning, too (the debate took place while the negotiation for his return

to office was still proceeding), made one of his most brilliant speeches in defence not merely of Lord Castlereagh's answer, but of the whole policy of the Government in originally going to the aid of Spain, though till "Buonaparte committed his aggression on that country we were at open war with her." And in the House of Lords no one raised a voice against Lord Liverpool's argument that the honour of the nation absolutely prohibited any negotiation being entered into of which the recognition of Joseph Buonaparte as King of Spain was to form a preliminary. It deserves remark that, in the same speech, he advanced no immovable objection to the recognition of Napoleon as Emperor of France, which Lord Holland had just advocated. On that subject he contented himself with the assertion that "the Government had acted upon the principle of all former Governments, and even of that of which the noble lord had formed a part, which was that such acknowledgments should not be made gratuitously, but ought to be the objects of a stipulation for a consideration and an equivalent." It was thus publicly avowed by the Prime Minister that there was no objection on point of principle to prevent our acknowledging the sovereignty of Napoleon (in fact there could be no question that he had been formally chosen by the French nation for their sovereign). And this avowal was acted upon during the early part of 1814, when we displayed a perfect willingness to make peace with him; for a treaty with him must inevitably have recognised his imperial authority; and the conclusion of such a treaty was prevented by no cause but his own indomitable obstinacy.

At the end of July the Parliament was prorogued, and it had hardly separated when intelligence arrived which rendered the maintenance of Joseph Buonaparte on the throne of Spain hopeless even to the French marshals. The day after the debate in the House of Commons Wellington had won at Salamanca a victory which had been equalled by no British army since the days of

Marlborough, and had opened himself the way to Madrid, from which the usurping foreigner was forced to make a hasty retreat. Nearly a year, indeed, still elapsed, before a still more crushing defeat compelled him to flee altogether from the country; but the day on which he was first expelled from his capital by the irresistible conqueror of Salamanca virtually put an end to his hopes of permanently retaining the kingdom to which, against his own will, he had been transferred.

Nor was Spain the only quarter in which Napoleon's military schemes were disappointed. We need not dwell on the incidents of his Russian campaign, but it is in no respect foreign to our subject to mention how rapidly, as the intelligence of different events in that quarter of the world reached England, Lord Liverpool formed a shrewd and correct judgment of their probable effect on the affairs of Europe.

It was on him that Lord Wellington chiefly depended for intelligence of what was passing in the North, and Lord Liverpool was writing to him on the very day on which the news of the battle of Borodino arrived in Downing Street. The object of his letter had been to express his opinion that Wellington's capture of Madrid and Seville would open to him fresh sources of supply, which would relieve him from the difficulties under which he had hitherto laboured for want of specie. But he lengthened it to give the general his own views of the character which the French invasion of Russia was assuming. On this subject he says:

I send you enclosed the substance of the information which has this day been received from Lord Cathcart respecting the battle between the Russians and the French on the 7th of September. By comparing this account with the French bulletins you will be enabled to form some judgment of the result of this sanguinary action, which has certainly been creditable to the Russian arms. But, what is still more important, it does not appear that either the spirit of the Russian Government or of the

Russian nation has been at all subdued by the late events. On the contrary, they appear determined to persevere. And, if that perseverance should continue for six weeks or two months longer, Buonaparte will be in a situation more critical than any in which he has ever yet been engaged. He is now nearly 800 miles from the Russian frontier, and besides the main army in his front, which is receiving reinforcements daily, he has two formidable corps on each of his flanks. What a moment for Austria to strike a blow ! But this is more than we can expect.

It was more than could be expected at the moment : not that Lord Liverpool was mistaken in his idea of the view which, in spite of her having given one of her princesses to Napoleon for a bride, Austria was beginning to take of her national interests, but she had learnt caution from her many disasters ; and another year was to elapse, and Wellington was to win another still more decisive victory, before those who ruled the councils of Vienna could feel that the hour had arrived when they could safely assume a tone of independence, which in the eyes of Napoleon was almost equivalent to a declaration of war.<sup>1</sup> A letter dated three weeks later is still more worthy of preservation as a proof how worthy of the first place in the Government of England was he who, discarding all passion and illusion, could reason thus, as accurately as confidently, on the future results of the drama, of which each day's intelligence was presenting some new phase. Not the least remarkable passage in the letter is that in which he already anticipates, and suggests to Wellington, the invasion of the south of France, a year before it was executed ; perhaps even before the idea of such an operation had occurred to the general himself. Lord Chatham has been extolled as one of the greatest of war ministers, but no event in his administration displays so signal a fore-

<sup>1</sup> Alison states that the news of the battle of Vittoria reached Dresden on the morning of the 30th of June, and decided the line taken by Austria in the negotiations which were just about to be opened at Prague between France and Austria (chap. lxxix. § 17).

sight of what another campaign might render practicable. The occupation of the southern provinces of France by the British army was, as we shall see hereafter, the event which more than any other single circumstance ensured the final overthrow of Napoleon. And it is not derogating from the skill or glory of the hero who accomplished it, to point out that some portion of the credit due to so bold a conception belongs to the minister who at so early a period entertained and recommended it.

*Private.*

Fife House, October 27th, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

You will have seen by the public papers the particulars of the military operations which have recently occurred in Russia. Buonaparte might calculate, and indeed he did calculate, that the Emperor of Russia would make peace for the purpose of saving Moscow ; but now that Moscow has been abandoned by the Russians, after everything that was valuable in it which could be removed had been taken away ; that the greater part of the city has been destroyed ; that the spirit and enthusiasm of the Russians increases under all the dangers and difficulties with which they have been surrounded ; that the Government has not been intimidated, but continues to manifest the most determined perseverance : under all these circumstances the situation of the French army must have become most critical. The season of the year must operate likewise against them in a degree incalculable. It is impossible that Buonaparte can have found any considerable supply of provisions in Moscow, and, if he cannot occupy a sufficient extent of country to be enabled to lay in his supplies in the course of this month and the beginning of November, his army must be starved. We have accounts from Lord Cathcart as late as the 3d of this month, and Paris papers as late as the 22d, which might contain intelligence from Moscow as late as the 6th, and no events had then happened to alter the relations of the armies. It is material that you should be informed of a circumstance which has not yet become public, but which furnishes the strongest proof of the determination of the Emperor of Russia to per-



severe in the contest, and of his confidence in the British Government. In order to guard against all contingencies, he has announced to Lord Cathcart his determination to send his fleets to the ports of this country, and measures were taking, when Lord Cathcart despatched his last messenger, to give effect to these intentions.

Notwithstanding this favorable aspect of affairs in the North, I am ready to admit that Buonaparte has escaped from so many difficulties, and his resources are so extraordinary, that he may be able to extricate himself from his present situation, perilous as it is. He may be able to beat Kutuzow completely, for a drawn battle or half success would not answer his purpose. He may, by means of the reinforcements which he is ordering in the direction of Russia from all quarters, establish his communications so entirely with the frontier of Poland as to command the resources of that part of the country. These measures would be difficult, but might not be impossible. One advantage, however, must infallibly arise from the present state of things: that all the resources of France, for many months to come, must be turned in the direction of Russia, that reinforcements of any considerable extent cannot be sent to Spain, and that you will therefore have to calculate only on the existing French force in the Peninsula for the operations of the winter, of next spring, and probably of next summer.

You have been so good upon former occasions as to inform me, before the meeting of Parliament, of what were your own general views as to prospective operations. I have kept these communications to myself, or have extended them at most to two or three of my colleagues, but I have felt considerable advantage from having them in the course of the discussions which have taken place, as it has enabled me to give a tone to the debate which would have been otherwise impossible. The peculiar circumstances of the present moment would render such a communication more than ever valuable.

General Nugent will, I believe, deliver to you this letter. You will find him a very intelligent man: he is certainly more attached to the Italian operation than I am.

Lord Bathurst has, I know, desired your opinion fully upon this subject. Though I have no settled or fixed opinion, I <

the inclination of my mind, in the event of the French being driven out of the Peninsula, is strongly in favour of an operation in the south of France in preference to any other. In addition to the advantage which would arise from your army being readily equipped for this service, which it could not be for a great length of time for any other, I conceive that you would have no difficulty in carrying with you some of the Spanish corps, which would have the effect of keeping up their military ardour and natural antipathy to the French, instead of suffering them, after the French had left the country, to relax under a false sense of security.

Excuse me, my dear Lord, for having gone so much at length into these subjects ; I have, in fact, been thinking aloud upon them ; and I thought there would be no harm in bringing under your consideration those ideas which the extraordinary circumstances of the present crisis have presented to my own mind.

I am, my dear Lord,

Yours, &c.,

*To the* MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON.

LIVERPOOL.

Another letter of nearly the same date to Lord Cathcart, who was with the Russian emperor during these transactions, expresses still more fully his feelings with respect to the prospect which the general results of the campaign, as far as it had yet gone, were already opening to Europe.

*Private and confidential.*

Fife House, October 22d, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

It would be difficult for me to express to you, in adequate terms, the satisfaction which we have all felt at the receipt of your despatches of the 30th of September and of the 3d instant.

The intention of the Emperor of Russia to send his fleets to the ports of this country is so decided a manifestation of his determination to persevere in the contest in which he is engaged, and at the same time so clear a proof of his confidence in the British Government, that the most beneficial effects cannot fail to result from it.

It will excite, I have no doubt, the enthusiasm of this country in

the cause of Russia in the same degree in which it has been exerted in that of Spain ; and you must be aware, from your own observation, of the advantages which have resulted to our allies, as well as to ourselves, from the popularity of the Spanish war.

The extraordinary fortune of Buonaparte in escaping from difficulties in which he has been involved has created in mankind a natural indisposition to be sanguine about the result of any operation which he has undertaken ; but upon any rational principle of calculation I cannot see how it is practicable for him to extricate himself from his present situation if the Russians have but the steadiness to persevere in the system which they have adopted.

It should be recollected that the Spanish war is the only national war in which Buonaparte has been engaged before the present. The Russians have therefore the example of Spain and the success of Spain before their eyes ; they have many advantages which the Spaniards have not, especially those which arise from the distance of the Russian empire from France.

In the present situation of the French army nothing short of an army can be sent to reinforce it, no detachments could be expected to reach their head-quarters in safety ; and for every supply of every description they must depend upon the country in which they are acting, and in which every man they meet is a foe.

I have been led further than I intended into this subject from an anxious desire that you should be informed of the strong impression which exists in my mind of ultimate success to the Russian arms in the event of perseverance. You will feel, I am confident, all the importance of keeping alive the national spirit which now exists in Russia by the strongest assurances of the common interest which is felt in their cause, not only by the British Government, but by the British people, and that it is the universal opinion in this country that, if the Emperor shall succeed in repelling the invaders, his dominions will be more secure, his throne will be more firm, than at any former period, and he will crown himself with everlasting glory.

I am most happy in having this opportunity of assuring you that the whole of your proceedings from the commencement of your

mission have met with the entire approbation of the Prince Regent and of his Government.

I have the honour to be, &c.

To LORD CATHCART.

LIVERPOOL.

Parliament was dissolved in the autumn, and this combination of propitious occurrences, Wellington's splendid achievements in the South, and Buonaparte's disasters in the North, had a marked effect on the new elections. But those who have been accustomed to believe that in the old days of unreformed Parliaments the Government of the day had the means of influencing a sufficient number of seats to turn the scale on the majority of important questions, will be surprised to read Lord Liverpool's statement of the total amount of his influence, in the following letter addressed to the brother of the Lord Chancellor:

*Private and confidential.*

Fife House, September 25th, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received the favour of your letter, and I can assure you I feel all the importance of having the King's Advocate in Parliament. I should hope that this may be accomplished if he can assist himself to a certain degree. You will, perhaps, be surprised when I tell you that the Treasury have only one seat free of expense, for which our friend Vansittart will be elected. I have two more which personal friends have put at my disposal: and this is the sum total of my powers free of expense.

Mr. Curwen's bill<sup>1</sup> has put an end to all money transactions between Government and the supposed proprietors of boroughs. Our friends, therefore, who look for the assistance of Government must be ready to start for open boroughs, where the general influence of Government, combined with a reasonable expense on their own part, may afford them a fair chance of success. I should hope the King's Advocate would have no difficulty in agreeing to what has been proposed to him; in

<sup>1</sup> In 1809, Mr. Curwen, M.P. for Carlisle, carried a Bill to prevent the sale of Seats in Parliament. Lord Liverpool supported it warmly in the House of Lords, though Perceval, at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, opposed it.

doing which he will have the same advantage as many of our official supporters who have been in Parliament for years.

I am, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

To SIR W. SCOTT.

Small, however, as the direct influence of the Government was, the result of the elections gave the ministers a good working majority.<sup>1</sup> Not only because the utter failure of the recent attempts to form any other Cabinet were to all reasonable people a sufficient cause for supporting them, but because facts, more unbending than the best framed arguments, showed that happier effects could not be expected from any Administration whatever than those which had flowed from their measures. The Public Peace Bill had been wholly successful in restoring tranquillity to the manufacturing districts. The glorious achievements of our armies in Spain abundantly refuted those who imputed to the ministers niggardliness or incapacity in supplying the troops with means of success; while, in spite of the rupture with America, trade was reviving. Even Ireland was tranquil and flourishing; and the following letter from the new secretary presents a picture of its state at this time which its unfortunate rarity renders worth preserving:

*Private.*

Dublin Castle, September 14th, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD LIVERPOOL,

I assure you that we fully participate in your joy at all the good news which you have sent us from the Peninsula, and I think we may attribute to it in a great measure the extraordinary tranquillity of this country in every part of it. Even this state of quiet, however, does not satisfy the *very loyal*, and I am told that some of them would prefer a little agitation to so dead a calm.

I have written privately to Lord Sidmouth on the subject of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Colchester's Diary, November 22, 1812, says "The calculation of strength is computed at an increase of 60 on the side of the Administration, putting Lord Wellesley's and Canning's friends on the side of Opposition, and an increase of 24 above the ministerial side, as returned upon the Duke of Portland's Parliament in 1807."

opening the distillation from grain. It is suspended by law until the 31st of December next, but the Lord Lieutenant has the power of opening it by proclamation on any day after the 1st of October, giving one month's notice. From the information which I have been able to collect the potato crop is more than usually abundant; and there is every probability that the corn harvest will produce more than an average supply, notwithstanding the present extraordinary price of corn in the markets. We can little afford to lose the revenue which will be derived from distillation, and, as I have said to Lord Sidmouth, any objection to the renewal of distillation at the earliest period must arise from external causes, from the necessity of replacing a deficiency in the harvest of Great Britain, or of providing those means of subsistence for our armies in Spain of which the rupture with America may have in part deprived them.

I should be most anxious to have your opinion and advice before anything is decided upon finally. The period is fast approaching when the Lord Lieutenant may exercise his power. In a conversation which I had with Mr. Marsden the other day, he calculated the revenue from the duty on spirits at nearly a million per annum.

The prospect of the Duke of Richmond's stay here gives me the greatest possible satisfaction: indeed, if he left us, as Sir Charles Stanton is about shortly to resign his situation, a new Lord Lieutenant and Chief Under Secretary would find themselves, I fear, much embarrassed should any difficulties arise.

I am very anxious to do something with the press in Ireland, and I am not quite without hopes that we may put it on a better footing.

Pray give my kindest regards to Lady Liverpool, and assure her that I will keep my promise of writing to her.

I am, my dear Lord Liverpool,

Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

*P.S.* On looking over my letter I think I have much underrated the probable productiveness of the corn harvest.

Before the year closed Lord Liverpool had the satisfaction of seeing his anticipations respecting Napoleon's campaign in Russia more than fulfilled. The new Parlia-

ment was assembled for a short session before Christmas, in order to furnish the Government with a necessary supply of money; and on the 18th of December the ministers invited the general participation of the members in the sentiments to which we have seen Lord Liverpool give utterance respecting the enthusiastic sympathy with which the British people regarded the efforts and sacrifices which the Russians had made for their national independence. They brought down to both Houses a message from the Regent, recommending a grant of money to aid those who had been stripped of everything by the French invasion; and, though one or two members of the Opposition questioned the necessity or propriety of the grant, the general feeling was so strongly in favour of it that no one ventured to divide against it; and in the midst of our own difficulties, and while the distress in some quarters of our own island, if abated, was still unextinguished, we thus sent 200,000*l.* to succour those who but a few months before had been our unprovoked and bitter enemies.

As it was afterwards learnt, on that same evening Napoleon reached Paris, himself the bearer of the news that in the few months that had elapsed since he last quitted it he had lost above half a million of his best troops. He strove to render the horrifying intelligence as endurable as he might by false excuses, and boastings which he himself could hardly believe, and which from a large proportion of his subjects, who were already beginning to repent their submission to his rule, could not disguise the fact that, while adding to the number of her enemies, at the same time he had stripped France of the power to withstand them.

The news of his return had not reached England when, four days afterwards, Lord Liverpool addressed the following letter to Wellington, who, in consequence of the arrogant disobedience of Ballasteros, had been compelled to evacuate Madrid and to raise the siege of Burgos, and was now in winter quarters on the Portuguese frontier, resting his troops and meditating exploits which



should realize the anticipations of his friends in the Cabinet, and make the next campaign even more glorious than the last.

*Private and confidential.*

Fife House, December 22d, 1812.

MY DEAR LORD,

I received by the last mail the favour of your letter of the 23rd ult., and I am very much obliged to you for the important information which it contains, as well with respect to your past proceedings as to the best judgment you can form at present of your future prospects.

I trust you will be satisfied with all that has passed in Parliament on your account.

The disposition to abuse the Government for the retreat from Burgos and Madrid might naturally have been expected in the actual state of political parties.

It has, however, produced no effect of any consequence to the prejudice of those in whose hands the administration of the Government has been placed. We have gone through our short session in the most satisfactory manner. Lord Castlereagh has done admirably, and has raised himself very considerably in the eyes of the House of Commons. The two Houses of Parliament adjourn to-day to the 2d and 3d of February.

The intelligence of the operations in Russia will have reached you through the gazettes and other public papers. There has been no example within the last twenty years, amidst all the extraordinary events of the French Revolution, of such a change of fortune as Buonaparte has experienced within the last five months. If there is any political speculation upon which reliance may safely be placed, we may now say that Russia is for ages alienated from France and united to this country. The most formidable army ever collected by Buonaparte has been substantially destroyed, and it remains only to be ascertained whether he will be able to escape, and with what remnant of that army with which he entered Russia in June last. By the best accounts the Russians have not taken less than 100,000 prisoners.

The French cavalry is now never mentioned in any of the bulletins, and must, in fact, have ceased to exist, except, perhaps,

a small proportion of it immediately attached to the person of Buonaparte. The greater part of his artillery we know has either been taken or abandoned.

I am still, however, of opinion that he will contrive to escape with a part of his force ; but that part is so reduced in number, and in such a condition, that it will be necessary for him to take up a defensive position for the winter ; and I doubt whether it will be possible for him to collect such a force as may enable him to begin offensive operations in the next campaign.

Under these circumstances the question naturally occurs whether he will leave the French army in Spain. We have a report that he has ordered 40,000 men from that country to join him ; but I give this to you only as a report. I am inclined, however, to be of opinion that he will withdraw the greater part of his force from Spain : even if he should not be in a situation to renew offensive operations against Russia, his power and consequence in Germany, after the shock which his reputation has received, will depend upon his being able to assume a commanding attitude in that country.

The only efficient French army at the present moment in existence is the one under Soult ; and whatever it may cost Buonaparte to abandon Spain, I think he will prefer that alternative to the loss of his power, consequence, and influence in Germany. I may be wrong in this speculation, but I have given you my reasons for it ; and I have been particularly desirous of calling your attention to this view of the subject, in order that you may take the necessary means for obtaining early information of the movement of any French divisions towards the frontier, and that you may consider what measures may be most proper to be adopted if my conjecture should be realized.

I wish we could see any prospect of a wiser policy being adopted by Austria and Prussia, and particularly by the former, for I have no doubt the latter would act if she could rely upon the support of Austria. If these two Powers would really take advantage of the Russian successes, we might have hopes of effecting the deliverance of the Continent ; but nothing can be more abject than the Council of Vienna at this time, and I fear that neutrality is all that can be expected from them. We are

doing our best, however, to rouse them, and the wise and manly conduct which the Emperor of Russia has adopted towards them ought not to be wholly without effect.

Believe me to be, with great truth,

Yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

*To the* MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON.

The writer, it need hardly be said, was mistaken in his anticipation that the disasters in Russia would lead Napoleon to withdraw the greater part of his force from Spain. But from some secret feeling which it is difficult to fathom Napoleon clung to the maintenance of his influence in that country with more than even his habitual tenacity. It is possible that he was actuated by an unwillingness to acknowledge failure where Louis XIV. had succeeded ; and that, as that monarch, in spite of his defeats on the Danube and in the Netherlands, had succeeded in preserving the Spanish crown for his grandson, he conceived his own honour staked on proving that his disasters beyond the Rhine could not wrest the same diadem from the head of his brother ; and, in submission to this feeling, at a late period, months after Joseph had been expelled from Spain, he broke off one negotiation which promised him great advantages rather than acknowledge the right of Ferdinand to the crown of which his treachery had deprived him. That the course which Lord Liverpool now expected him to take would have been the wisest conduct which he could have adopted no one can doubt. It would indeed have set Wellington's army free to act a year earlier in the south of France, but it would have furnished Napoleon himself with a valuable reinforcement, which might probably have changed the fortune of war on the east of the Rhine, as at least to have prevented Austria from deciding against him, and, if he could have been contented to retain it in peace, to have preserved him his crown.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Tranquillity of the session of 1813—Fresh disputes of the Prince and Princess of Wales—Advice of the Council to the Prince—Some of the Opposition take up the cause of the Princess—Discussions on the American war—Renewal of the East India Company's charter—Establishment of the bishopric of Calcutta—Appearance of Warren Hastings in the House of Commons—Opinions delivered by him and Sir John Malcolm on India—The charter is renewed with slight modifications—The battle of Vittoria—Wellington's invasion of France.

THE expectations of a tranquil session of Parliament were completely realized. During the year 1813 the struggle with France was visibly drawing towards its termination; his enemies were pressing Napoleon on every side, and, as battle succeeded battle in Germany, and Wellington, advancing steadily with that army which was never again to retreat, was reaping victory after victory, the attention of all England was so riveted on those mighty deeds of war that every other contest was laid aside: party itself was mute in the presence of the great events which were taking place, and even the leaders of the Opposition for a moment seemed to postpone every other feeling to those of a desire to support the Government in every effort necessary to furnish our great general with abundant means of action, and of admiration for the genius which was employing them so gloriously.

One affair alone of a troublesome character caused some anxiety and vexation to the ministers; but it was not of a political character, and the judgment with which Lord Liverpool dealt with it checked even much of the scandal

which one of the parties seemed desirous to cause. Since the enquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales, some years before, the prince had restricted the intercourse between her and the Princess Charlotte to a weekly visit. But in the summer of 1812 he thought fit to limit it still further, and the visits of the daughter to her mother were reduced by one-half. The alteration was apparently only suggested by considerations of convenience, since the youthful Princess was not at this time residing in London but was at Windsor, under the care of the Queen; at all events, no conduct of the Princess of Wales was alleged as the cause of it. But she was furious at the change. She went down to Windsor, and claimed an interview with her daughter; she wrote to the queen; she wrote to the regent under cover to Lord Liverpool, desiring him to present her letter to her husband. The prince refused to receive it, and sent it back, and found that even before he returned it she had sent a copy of it to the newspapers. She obtained an interview with Queen Charlotte, who pointed out to her with great kindness that she herself had no power to interfere with the regent's authority over his own child, and assured her that some points of his management of which she complained had been arranged by the King himself before his illness. For one of the subjects on which the princess made the loudest complaints was that her daughter had not yet been confirmed; and her grandfather had some years before expressed his opinion that, as her confirmation must be in some degree a public ceremonial, it would be quite time enough for her to be confirmed when she was eighteen.

The princess, however, persisted in her demand to have her intercourse with her daughter put upon its former footing; and the prince, behaving with as much prudence and dignity as was within his reach, considering how lamentably and inexcusably wrong he had been in the cause and origin of the quarrel, referred the matter to his minister with the addition of the principal judicial and ecclesiastic

authorities, and demanded their decision on the propriety of his maintaining the restrictions which he had imposed on the intercourse between his wife and daughter. On what was in reality the cardinal question of all, the guilt or innocence of the Princess of Wales, the committee which was now constituted was not wholly agreed. It could not be questioned that the commission which had investigated her conduct had formally acquitted her of criminality; and the chancellor pronounced his opinion that their report was conclusive as to the view which all concerned were bound publicly to take of her conduct, and that that question could not now be reopened; while Lord Ellenborough, the Chief Justice, refused to take that report for more than a verdict of acquittal because the charges had failed of legal proof, affirming at the same time his private belief of their truth. It was evidently a question of great difficulty and delicacy, since the rank of the parties concerned, and the condition of one of them as the future king and actual ruler of the nation, opened considerations which seemed to forbid the case to be decided on the rules of strict law. And in coming to their final decision the majority of the committee were probably guided very greatly by their conviction that their judgment would not be allowed to influence the regent's conduct; but that what he was seeking was not really advice how he should act, but such a recommendation as should support and sanction the resolution which he had unalterably formed. They therefore looked on themselves rather as statesmen forced to choose the least of evils, than as judges on whom it was incumbent to listen to no voice but that of justice, and they were fortified in their opinion by the indecency of the princess's own conduct in publishing the letter which she had written to the prince even before she had received it back from Lord Liverpool.

The committee, therefore, unanimously reported their advice to be that the intercourse between the princesses

“should continue to be subject to regulation and restraint,” without taking any notice of the propriety of increasing that restraint, which indeed was a matter that could not but be left wholly at the regent’s discretion; but it could not be expected that the princess would acquiesce in such a termination of the dispute. She was not without able advisers to help her to give a plausible colouring to her case; and it was easy to represent this appointment of a new committee as a fresh impeachment of her honour, and as the establishment of a tribunal to judge her behind her back without her being supplied with any information as to the charges made against her, the evidence on which they rested, or even as to the precise character which the members considered to have been imposed on themselves. The difficulty in which she thus found herself placed “compelled her,” as she expressed herself, “to throw herself upon the wisdom and justice of Parliament,” and in a letter which she addressed to the Speaker, who had been one of the recent committee, and which she desired him to communicate to the House of Commons, she denounced their report as “containing fresh aspersions on her character, though its vagueness rendered it impossible to be precisely understood,” and prevented her from “knowing exactly with what she was charged.” She claimed “either to be treated as innocent or to be proved guilty;” “desired the fullest investigation of her conduct during the time she had resided in this country;” adding, “that she feared no scrutiny provided she were tried by impartial judges.”

Such a letter was, in fact, an appeal to Parliament. The ministers, as must have been expected, took no notice of it, feeling that the whole business was odious and discreditable, but at the same time one on which they had no very strong belief that the lady had, latterly at least, deserved much better treatment than she had received; while they were certainly assured that no representations which they or Parliament could make could alter the disposition and resolution of her husband.



But one or two members of the Opposition, having no feeling of responsibility or public decency to check them, thought that they could annoy both the regent and ministers by an attack on the committee's report. And Mr. Cochrane Johnston, the member for Grampound, brought the question formally before the House by a string of resolutions, which represented that the case of the princess was one which might possibly lead at some future time to "disputes touching the succession to the throne;" that the charges brought against her had never yet been submitted to any tribunal having "any legal power to pronounce a judgment or decision on the case," and therefore, on these grounds, demanded "an ample and impartial investigation of all the allegations, facts, and circumstances, while the witnesses on both sides were still living, and while all the charges were capable of being clearly established or clearly disproved."

Even after Mr. Johnston had fixed a day for the proposal of his resolutions, there seemed some chance of their never being brought forward. For another member, Mr. Lygon, of Worcestershire, impressed with the scandal of bringing the private quarrels of the heads of the royal family before the nation as a court of appeal, enforced the standing order for the exclusion of strangers from the House, and announced his intention to do so whenever the question should be discussed: and a third member, Mr. Bennet, of Shrewsbury, eager above all things for the publicity which most decent people desired to avoid, declared with equal positiveness that, whenever Mr. Lygon should move to clear the House he would follow that motion by another for its adjournment. However, he was induced to give way, and Mr. Johnston had the mortification of finding that his proceeding was so adverse to the good taste of the House, that he could not venture to divide upon it, but was forced to submit to its being unanimously rejected. He professed to find comfort in having, as he said, established

the innocence of the princess; and it is certain that no one expressed a contrary opinion, though one or two speakers hardly went further than to declare themselves unconvinced of her criminality. Lord Castlereagh was the only spokesman of the Ministry, and he had an easy task when he contended that, whatever might be the truth, the House of Commons could not be the proper tribunal to decide the question; and one still easier, if possible, when, having described the letter written by the Princess of Wales to the regent as "an appeal to the country against their prince, and to the child against her parent," he denounced its publication by the writer as in itself affording a justification of the restrictions placed on her intercourse with her daughter, and even of an increased rigour in those restrictions.

Yet the champions of the princess, if it may not rather be said those who hated the regent, were not satisfied. A few days afterwards Mr. Whitbread presented a petition from Sir John and Lady Douglas, begging to be prosecuted for perjury. On the former inquiry into the princess's conduct it was from them that the testimony came which, if believed, would have been fatal to the princess's character; but their evidence had been disproved in every particular, though there were insurmountable difficulties in the way of procuring their legal conviction as wilfully perjured. Mr. Whitbread, however, made their petition a pretext for uttering a most violent philippic against the prince; doing him, however, rather service than injury by his vehemence, and by the strange means which he employed to sustain his argument; reading to the House documents which in the very same breath he admitted he could not prove to be authentic, and of which his own friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, immediately denied and disproved the authenticity. His motion, which dwindled into one for the prosecution of the printers of the different newspapers which had contained documents relating to the original investigation, no one

would even second, so palpably was his object merely to insult and damage the prince. He withdrew it for the present, but in the course of the spring both he and Mr. Johnston made more than one attempt to renew the subject; on one occasion taking a step which the Speaker himself was forced to reprove as "novel and unparliamentary,"<sup>1</sup> in moving without notice to examine Lord Moira. Lord Castlereagh would not condescend even to oppose the motion in more than the briefest terms; and the feeling of the House was so unmistakably shown that such discussions must be useless, and worse than useless, that even they at last allowed the matter to drop.

The opinion which the House of Commons affirmed it to be beyond its province to pronounce did not bear the same appearance to the eyes of the leaders of the Common Council of the City of London. They resolved to present an address to the princess to congratulate her on the result of the late discussions, which they did not hesitate to describe as her escape from a conspiracy aimed at her honour and her life. She gladly received them with all possible ceremony at Kensington Palace; and a part of the procession chose to take the line of Pall Mall for the purpose of hissing as they passed by Carlton House. In the next year we shall find the subject revived, under circumstances which made her appear to greater advantage.

Far more satisfactory were the debates on the war with America. It was of necessity one of the first subjects brought before Parliament; and the view taken by the Opposition of the papers which the ministers presented to Parliament, in explanation of the policy which they had pursued, was so nearly identical with the opinions which had guided the Cabinet that Lord Liverpool had ample grounds for the self-congratulation which he expressed at the unanimity of the House on the subject of the unprovoked

<sup>1</sup> The Diary of Lord Colchester (at that time Speaker), ii. 434.

wantonness with which the Americans had forced on the war ; their precipitation in doing which he was probably correct in tracing very mainly to the partiality with which they had at all times regarded France.

Almost equally cordial and unanimous was the support which both Houses gave to the decision formed by the Government with respect to the East India Company. The charter which had been granted to them was on the point of expiring, and for some months Parliament had been besieged with petitions on the subject : those whose pecuniary interests were concerned, as proprietors of the Company, soliciting the renewal of the charter without modification or abridgment as a measure in which not only their own prosperity, but the welfare and security of India itself depended ; while those merchants who were unconnected with it, and who had long borne it ill-will as the possessor of a lucrative monopoly, were at least equally desirous to induce Parliament to abolish that monopoly, to throw open the trade, and to abrogate all restrictions upon what they represented as the indefeasible right of all the King's subjects, to establish their abode in, and commerce with, any country whatsoever, and most of all with any which were among the possessions of the British crown. After a long and patient consideration Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had decided on a middle course. They could not deny the general right of all British subjects to be such as the petitioners against the renewal of the charter represented it : but, at the same time, it appeared to them that the case of India was altogether exceptional ; that many reasons interfered with the application of this general principle to so peculiar a country : and therefore they determined on a middle course, proposing to confirm to the Company for twenty years more its political authority ; but opening the Eastern trade, with the exception of that carried on with China, to any who might choose to engage in it. And, while thus preserving to the Company its power of government, and compelling it to admit the general body

of our merchants to a participation of the Indian commerce, they exhibited a laudable regard for the future welfare and civilization of the natives by planting the Church among them on the same footing on which it flourished among ourselves. No previous Government had looked upon it as a part of its duty to establish and encourage religious observances in our colonies. But Lord Liverpool took this opportunity of setting an example which has since been followed in all our dependencies. And one series of clauses provided for the appointment at Calcutta of a bishop and archdeacons, with adequate salaries and retiring pensions. Not only were our own fellow-Englishmen in India, who now amounted to nearly 150,000, entitled to such an establishment, but it could not fail, it was hoped, favorably to impress the natives, who, scrupulously attentive to the forms and ceremonies of their different religions, had seen with amazement the indifference to worship of any kind that had hitherto characterised their Christian masters, except where some zealous missionary had made his way into the country, with an independence of the authority of the Government which, in the eyes of those who did not understand our constitution, bore no little appearance of a defiance or renunciation of it.

The most interesting occurrences during the debates which necessarily took place on a subject of such importance, arose out of the assent which Lord Castlereagh very prudently gave to a proposal that, before the House came to a final vote, it should seek information from those who had a more practical knowledge of the question in all its bearings than could be possessed by at least the great majority of its members. And it happened that, though now in extreme old age, that illustrious Governor-General to whom above all other men the prosperity of the Company, and of the country itself apart from the Company, was owing, was still alive, and still enjoying the full possession of all his faculties. Thirty years before, on his return from his government, malice, ignorance, and the misdirected

enthusiasm of philanthropy had combined to rob him of the reward due to his unequalled genius for organization and for government, to his dauntless and unwearied energy, to his unswerving public spirit, to his incorruptible disinterestedness. To the disgrace alike of the assailants who prompted, of the House who sanctioned, and even of the age which endured such a scene, he, the greatest man then alive, had been brought day after day, and year after year, as a criminal to the bar of that House which ought to have greeted his return to his native land with gratitude and acclamation. Now, when of his chief accusers all but one had passed away, and when he,<sup>1</sup> too, had ceased to sit among the members, a new generation was to make a tardy atonement, such as it was, for the ungrateful injustice of its predecessor. When the old man entered the House to give his evidence and opinion, every member rose to receive him, standing with respectful admiration till he took his seat in the chair which had been provided for him. On a later day another man of extended experience in India, where he had already acquired an eminent reputation, which he was destined to raise still higher, Sir John Malcolm, was also examined; and, though not very closely connected with the subject of this narrative, one or two of the opinions delivered by each are so remarkable, particularly as throwing a light upon, and being illustrated by, recent events, that they are worth disinterring from the mass of Parliamentary reports under which they are buried.

Both Hastings and Malcolm were fully agreed on the mischief which would be caused, not only to the interests of the East India Company, but to the prosperity, safety, and peace of India itself, if the country should so be thrown open that Europeans in general (by which term, however, they only meant Englishmen) should be permitted to fix their abode in India without restraint. Hastings drew his objections from the character both of the Englishman and of

<sup>1</sup> At the election in the autumn Sheridan had lost his seat for Stafford.

the native; premising, at the same time, that he spoke more of the natives of Bengal and its dependencies, than of those of the other provinces and more remote districts, some of which indeed had only been brought under British authority since his departure from the country. "Nothing," said he, "can be more opposite than the characters of the English and the natives of India. The native Indian is weak in body and timid in spirit; he is not unsusceptible of resentment, but without that feeling of shame which, under the appellation of honour, in the breast of an European makes resentment a species of law, and which overrules the fear of law, pain, danger, and death. This" (he however explained) "is not the absolute character of the people taken in the mass. The native Indian is individually such as I have described him; but there are cases in which a provocation of a general grievance would excite a whole people, and even a detached number of them, to all the ferocities of insurrection. The Englishman is quite a different character in India. The name of an Englishman is both his protection and a sanction for offences which he would not dare to commit at home. There is, besides, the highest idea of a common participation in the sovereignty of the Company, which possesses, I believe, with very little difference, the mind of every Englishman in it: this idea in the lower orders of the people rises to despotism, and is liable to all the excesses of despotism where the prerogative attached to it can be asserted with impunity." An unrestrained liberty to Englishmen to sojourn in India would lead generally, in his belief, to acts of tyranny and oppression of the natives. And his opinion on this matter was entitled to the greatest weight, because, as he explained to the House, he had not always held it; he had thought that, under certain regulations and restrictions, "the admission of free traders into the country would not only be innoxious but beneficial; but then only on the understanding that the authority of the Company was to remain unchanged, and that all British subjects in India, residing in their territories, were amenable



to it." Nor did he believe that the expansion of our export trade would be greatly furthered by opening the traffic with India to all who might desire to embark in it. For "the poor in India might be said to have no wants; their wants were confined to their dwellings, their food, and a scanty portion of clothing, which they could have almost without any cost." The only rich class still remaining he considered to be "the zemindars, who were almost all, if not all, Hindoos; and the Hindoo officers of the revenue and their habits were such as required no aid from our trade. Of the Mahometans, who once constituted the most opulent part of the community, few now remained, as he imagined, but the survivors of the pensioners whom we found when we first became masters of the country. And these, from their present impoverished state, would certainly not be able to purchase any of the articles of luxury with which our ships could furnish them."

Sir John Malcolm's residence in India had begun just at the time when that of Hastings ended; and, in a long course of varied employments, he had had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the natives of every part of our own territories, and even with some of the tribes which dwelt beyond our border. With this more extensive knowledge he drew distinctions between the character and disposition of the different Indian races, which Hastings had not had the same opportunity of observing. His answer to a question put to him as to "the prevailing character of the Hindoos" is worth giving in his own words: "The character of the different classes of Hindoos, which compose a great proportion of the population of the subjects of the British Government in India, varies in different parts of the empire perhaps as much as, if not more than, the natives of Europe do from each other. Under the Bengal establishment there are two descriptions of Hindoos of a very distinct race: below Patna the race of Hindoos called Bengalese I consider to be weak in body and timid in mind, and to be in general marked by the

accompaniments of timidity, which are fraud and servility. I think, as far as my observation went, this class appeared to diminish both in their bodily strength and their mental qualities as they approach the coast. And those below Calcutta are, I think, in character and appearance among the lowest of all our Hindoo subjects. But from the moment that you enter the district of Bahar, or rather the district of Benares, throughout all the territories in that quarter subject to the Company and their dependent ally the Nabob of Oude, and the Douab, the Hindoo inhabitants are a race of men generally speaking not more distinguished by their lofty stature, which rather exceeds that of Europeans, and their robust frame of body, which in almost all is inured to martial toil by exercises (I speak more particularly of the Rajpoots, who form a considerable portion of this population), than they are for some of the finest qualities of the mind. They are brave, generous, and humane, and their truth is as remarkable as their courage. The great proportion of the army of the Bengal establishment is composed of these men; and it is remarkable that there are few corporal punishments in that army, the slightest reproach being in fact felt as the greatest punishment is among other nations. It is more than half a century since the army of Bengal was first formed, and I believe there is no instance of any officers being more sincerely attached to their men than the British officers have been during the whole of that period to the Hindoo native soldiery of that part of India. . . . . I have spoken more of the military class of Hindoos than of the others, because I am more acquainted with them; but from all I ever heard of the character of those who follow civil pursuits, it is much the same, allowing for difference of the habits of life, as that of the Bengal sepoy. On the coast of Coromandel the Hindoo is a weaker man than the Rajpoot; but still there are many classes among them which are highly respectable. On the other side of India, under the presidency of Bombay, the

Hindoos, inhabitants of Guzerat and our lately acquired provinces, are chiefly Mahrattas, and, from all I have heard or seen of them, are much superior to the inhabitants that I have described along the coast of Bengal, and even to those along the coast of the Carnatic."

As to their feelings towards the British authorities, he believed "the Hindoo population to be contented with the British sway; but he thought it probable that a great proportion of the Mahometan population might not be so much contented, because they had a more recent recollection than the Hindoos of that power which they had lost by the introduction of our Government." The two classes "lived together in as social habits as their faith would permit." And, in reply to a series of questions as to the probable result of any insurrection which might be attempted by either Hindoos or Mahometans, or both united, to overthrow our power, the views which he expressed have on some points been so remarkably corroborated by subsequent events that they still deserve the attentive consideration of our Indian statesmen. He "certainly did not think it was a common desire with the Mahometans in every part of India to subvert the British power, however it might be indulged by some of the turbulent members of that class, and particularly in the higher ranks, who had recently lost their authority. Nor, on the other hand, was he satisfied that all Hindoos were contented. He was able to speak only of the apparent general disposition of our subjects. If any ground were furnished to enable the Mahometans to induce the Hindoos to make common cause with them, he did not believe that our authority could last a single day." But when asked whether, while the Hindoos were contented, any attempt on the part of the Mahometans alone could seriously affect our power, his answer was, "The British power in India is spread over so vast a country, and the different provinces of that empire have such a varied population, that it is a difficult question: but there are, no doubt, provinces in our

empire, such as the Douab, of recent acquisition, where the great majority of the military part of the population are Mahometans ; and any insurrection in that province, for instance, could receive no check from any good disposition of the Hindoo inhabitants. In many other provinces the Hindoos form the great majority, and an insurrection of the Mahometans would be of comparatively less consequence : but I certainly conceive that the attachment of the Hindoo population is the chief source of our security in India. It is, however, to be remarked that in many parts of India the Hindoos and Mahometans have amalgamated more than could have been supposed from the difference of their persuasion ; and the Mahometans of India have not only become more lax in the performance of their religious duties than the Mahometans of neighbouring countries, but they seem gradually to have adopted some of the minor usages of the Hindoos. Nor is it unusual for Hindoo princes, such as Scindia and Holkar, to conciliate their Mahometan subjects by paying their devotions at the shrine of Mahometan saints, and mixing in their feasts." It is impossible to avoid remarking that these opinions seem to have been verified in some of their most important points by the great mutiny of 1857, which was a Mahometan outbreak, and in which our Hindoo subjects, as a rule, refused to participate.

The advantages to be derived by English merchants unconnected with the Company from any measure which might open the Indian trade to them he agreed with Hastings in estimating as very inconsiderable ; and for the same reasons which the great Governor-General had alleged. "The general population of India," he said, "were not likely to become customers for European articles, because they did not possess the means to purchase them," and "from their present simple habits of life and attire they did not require them." "In the principal settlements, and at some of the larger towns, he had known

some who (to flatter their superiors) imitated European manners, and adopted almost their dress; but such generally appeared to him to have lost in the estimation of their own class by a departure from the usages of their race. The rich settlement of Bombay was perhaps an exception to this rule: the Parsees," (said he) "who are extremely wealthy, and a perfectly distinct class, had assimilated more with the European character than perhaps any other race in India; and they spend a great deal of money in furnishing houses and purchasing carriages and other luxuries of a similar description: many of them are in the habit, I believe, of ordering very large supplies of articles from England, both for their own use and for sale; for they are nearly all merchants." He added, in answer to another question, that "Indian artisans, as manufacturers of European commodities," and also European artisans, had established themselves in the chief cities of these presidencies; the masters being generally Englishmen, and the workmen native Indians.

Lord Teignmouth, who, as Sir John Shore, had also been Governor-General, gave evidence which generally tallied with the opinions of Hastings and Malcolm, as did others whom the Committee summoned before them. And, fortified in their opinion of the propriety of maintaining the Company in the enjoyment of its sovereign authority by the unanimity of the men who both from natural capacity and opportunity were better able than any others to form a correct judgment of the effects of the existing system, and of the results which might be expected from its extinction or from any extensive modification of it, the ministers pressed on the bill which they had prepared with great energy and rapidity. It met with no formidable opposition in either House. A few amendments were moved to particular clauses, of which perhaps the most important was one which was proposed by Canning, to enable Parliament at the end

of ten years to reconsider the monopoly of the China trade, which by the bill was secured to the Company for twenty; but the amendment was rejected by a large majority. The most vehement resistance which any of the clauses encountered was excited by those providing for the establishment of the Church in India. Some of those members of the House of Commons who, as former servants of the Company, could cite their own experience, declared that no step of our Government would be viewed with such repugnance and horror by both Hindoos and Mahometans as any that gave the idea that we were desirous of forcing our religion on them: and one speaker, Sir Henry Montgomery, vehemently attacked the missionaries who were already labouring in India, their conduct in the country, and the reports of their success and progress which they sent home; extolled the religion of the Hindoos as "pure and unexceptionable;" pronounced their "moral character a great deal better than the moral character of the people of this country in general;" and declared that he would not risk the lives of his fellow-Christians in India to save the souls of all the Hindoos in the country.

The clause, however, like all the rest which were contested, was carried by a decisive majority. And in the House of Lords the opposition was still more inconsiderable. Lord Grenville indeed declaimed against what he termed the precipitation of the Ministry in not introducing the bill till the latter part of the session, with even more than his usual violence of language. For the Peers to pass it without more consideration, he declared, "would fix an eternal stigma upon their character in the eyes of all nations." He boasted of his own familiarity with the subject, the fruit of a deep study of it in all its bearings; but in the middle of June "he would not lend himself to a hypocritical and base pretence of discussion." Such exaggerated violence, though not unusual in the speaker, was calculated to defeat itself.

Lord Liverpool reminded both him and the House that, though the bill for renewing the charter had been but recently brought before Parliament, the resolutions on which it was founded had been under consideration for months, and the investigation of each separate resolution, with the examination of evidence to guide the deliberations of Parliament on each, had been the chief work of the session. All unnecessary delay, therefore, in coming to a settlement of the question, he deprecated as an infliction of wanton injury on every one connected with, or who hoped to be connected with, India. Not that he expected any instant results of importance from those parts of the bill which were new. He and his colleagues (as he explained their motives) had in every case been guided by the experience of years. And, as years had been required to justify the conclusions to which they had come, so the general results of many future years could alone decide whether those conclusions were sound or unsound. "The ministers had continued the China trade to the Company because experience had shown it to be beneficial. They had thrown open the Indian trade because it had been unproductive in their hands." As far as his own expectations were concerned, "he entertained no great hope of immediate advantage to the merchant from the export trade, but he thought very great advantage would accrue from opening the import trade to this country from India." The House so fully agreed with his views, the moderate expression of which contrasted agreeably with Lord Grenville's angry denunciations, that in the sole division on which the Opposition ventured they could only muster fourteen votes. And the general wisdom of the Government measure was shown by the fact, not only that under it India increased in prosperity of every kind even more than before, but that, as long as the Company was left in possession of the sovereign authority, all subsequent legislation followed the course indicated by this bill.



Meanwhile the news from the seat of war was daily becoming more exciting ; and our part in it more glorious. Before the opening of the campaign in the Peninsula the ministers gave a proof how highly they estimated the probability that Wellington's genius, if worthily seconded, would be able to achieve the deliverance of the Peninsula, by proposing a grant of a larger amount than had yet been asked for to enable his Majesty to maintain in his pay a body of Portuguese troops, and otherwise to aid the Portuguese Government. And so fully did the whole kingdom by this time participate in the expectations of Lord Liverpool and the Cabinet that two millions were voted without a dissentient voice. Hopes have seldom been so rapidly realized. Midsummer had not yet arrived when Wellington inflicted on the most numerous<sup>1</sup> army that had yet fought in Spain the most ignominious defeat that the French arms had sustained throughout the whole revolutionary war, and followed up his victory by a succession of blows, which speedily drove the whole of the invading army with their usurping king from the Spanish soil. It was to no purpose that Napoleon replaced Jourdain, who had been beaten at Vittoria, by Soult, who had never found any superior in military skill but Wellington himself, when four years before he was forced to retreat before him at Oporto. That great soldier fared no better than his predecessor. Wellington drove him from post to post ; defeated him at Sauron ; took St. Sebastian and Pampeluna before his face in spite of his utmost efforts to save those hitherto impregnable fortresses,

<sup>1</sup> Each army consisted of about 70,000 men ; the French, however, being very superior in both cavalry and artillery. At Salamanca the numbers were about 45,000 on each side. Even at Waterloo the numbers were inferior to those which fought at Vittoria. Wellington had not quite 68,000 men ; and, though Napoleon's strength cannot be exactly ascertained, it is probable that he had not the advantage of his conqueror in that respect by more than 5,000 men. In cavalry and artillery he had a very great superiority.

on the 7th of October crossed the Bidassoa ; and, after once more defeating the enemy in a smart action, carried out Lord Liverpool's suggestion of the preceding year, and established the victorious British standards on the soil of France. Lord Liverpool, who always kept his eyes fixed on every part of the war, on the allies in Germany almost as much as on our troops in Spain, and perhaps even with greater anxiety, because with less confidence, congratulated the conqueror almost as much on the political effects which he expected from his victories as on the victories themselves. The very night that the despatch announcing the triumph of Vittoria reached London he sent off messengers with the Gazette to the allied armies in Saxony, and to the diplomatists who were carrying on a tardy and delusive negotiation at Prague. From the beginning of May he had cherished a belief that but a slight improvement in the prospects of the allies was needed to decide Austria to join them. And, though he would not yet venture to speak sanguinely, he evidently hoped that so great a victory as that which had been gained on the Ebro would have a powerful effect on her councils. On Russia and Prussia he could now, he assured Wellington, firmly rely : while the Swedes were so cordial in the cause that their new prince, Bernadotte, was applying himself to strengthen the resolution of those sovereigns, the Czar and the King, to resist any temptations to make peace that might be offered them. The number of troops under arms was enormous. The Russians, Prussians, and Swedes alone, according to his calculation, amounted to a quarter of a million of men. Of the French force he was less accurately informed. As to his own army, he assured Wellington of his resolution to enable him to keep it in the fullest state of efficiency. And three or four days later he wrote to him more at length, explaining minutely the steps he had taken to diffuse the news of his victory over the Continent, and speculating with a degree of foresight rare in a civilian on

his subsequent operations, venturing, as before, on some suggestions of remarkable acuteness.

*Private and confidential.*

Pife House, July 7th, 1813.

MY DEAR LORD,

I trust you will be satisfied with the impression which your great and splendid victory has made upon the public in this country. I have no doubt it will produce a state of feeling not less gratifying upon the Continent, and I only hope it will arrive in time to counteract the political machinations of the enemy. We calculated that Buonaparte would receive the intelligence at Dresden nearly about the time that we received it in London; and he will certainly have some days to avail himself of his own knowledge of your success, and of the ignorance of the allies and of Austria respecting it. Every precaution was, however, taken to transmit the Gazette in French, Dutch, and German to the different parts of the coast with as little delay as possible, besides a messenger being sent to Stralsund, and to the headquarters of the Russian and Prussian armies. The event therefore will, I hope, be known before any prolongation of the armistice can have been settled.

We received yesterday the account of the treaties of alliance and concert being signed between this country, Russia, and Prussia. The intentions of Austria were still problematical. She was driving at peace, and the result of her endeavours will probably depend upon the degree of sacrifice and concession which Buonaparte will be induced to make under present circumstances to obtain it.

Although the suggestions I am about to make have certainly occurred to yourself, I think it right, however, at this particular moment to mention them. We may now entertain a reasonable hope that we shall succeed in driving the French out of Spain: the next step will be to *keep them out* of that country.

A British army of so large an amount as that now under your command cannot always remain there. It is material, therefore, to consider what measures can be adopted for rendering the Peninsula secure, without the necessary aid of a British force, to a small and limited extent.

In the first place, would it be practicable to apply the principle

upon which the lines before Lisbon have been formed to the passes of the Pyrenees, and in what degree would such a system afford security to the country?

Secondly, might not a permanent force be raised in the five northern provinces of Biscay, Navarre, Catalonia, Aragon, and the Asturias (where, from all accounts, the inhabitants are of a much more warlike character than in any other part of Spain), for the defence of the Pyrenees, to be equipped for this particular purpose, and to act in concert with the regular army; and could such a force in any degree be officered by British officers?

Thirdly, would it be expedient and practicable to combine these two objects with a British and Portuguese force, to a limited extent, say 20,000, 25,000, or even 30,000 men? and would these different measures, reduced into a system, afford any reasonable security against the renewed invasion of the French, regard being had to the nature and strength of the country in which they must, in the first instance, be compelled to operate?

I throw out these suggestions, not with a view to the present moment, being fully persuaded that it cannot now be expedient to reduce the allied armies in that quarter, or to divert them from operations in the south of France, if the war on the Continent should continue, and such operations should appear to be practicable; but, having always considered the independence of Spain and Portugal as the first continental object to which this country, under present circumstances, ought to look, it is material to form some opinion upon the practicability of a permanent system, the expense of which we may be able to maintain, independent of the extraordinary exertion which we have been recently making for the deliverance of those countries from French dominion.

Lord Castlereagh has written to your brother, Sir Henry Wellesley, to instruct him strongly to urge the Spanish Government to return to Madrid. Such a measure appears to be of the utmost importance, not only with a view of delivering that Government from the influence of the local prejudices of the town of Cadiz, but likewise for the purpose of giving an impression to the people of Spain at large, and to the other nations of Europe, that the Government of Spain entertain a just con-

fidence in their own strength ; an impression which may be productive of the most important consequences, both to the Peninsula and in Europe, at this time.

Believe me to be, my dear Lord,

Very sincerely yours,

*To the* MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON.

LIVERPOOL.

It must have been a great support to a general who, amid all his triumphs, was still not without his anxieties, to learn how fully the Ministry at home entered into his difficulties, as it was to the minister to find the general proceeding with such unchecked success to realize his long cherished expectations. Considering the greatness of the obstacles presented by the Pyrenees and the frontier fortresses, it is probable that neither can have calculated beforehand on the rapidity with which they were surmounted. As we have already mentioned, in less than four months after the battle of Vittoria, Lord Liverpool was able to congratulate Wellington, now a Field Marshal, on his entrance into France, and to encourage him at the same time with intelligence of the great events, both military and diplomatic, which were taking place on the other side of Europe.

*Private.*

London, October 20th, 1813.

MY DEAR LORD,

I congratulate you most sincerely on your late successes : whatever may be the result of these operations, the establishment of the British army in France, after the expulsion of the French armies from Spain, will be a proud event in our military history, and forms a new epoch in the transactions of this most extraordinary war.

We received last night letters from the head-quarters of the allied armies of the 29th of September. They bring the important intelligence of an arrangement having been concluded between the Austrians and Bavarians, by which the latter are to take part in the war against France. If this arrangement shall really be carried into effect (and there can be no doubt of it, if some unforeseen misfortune does not happen to the

allied forces), it will completely secure the deliverance of Germany, and probably of a large part of Italy. The situation of Buonaparte at Dresden is most critical, and the fate of his army might be considered as certain if there was *one head* that directed the operations of the allies, and that *a head* in which all had confidence. In amount of force, in quality of force, in zeal and spirit, military and national, the allies are greatly superior. Buonaparte's advantage consists in a simple command, opposed to a divided command. With this advantage, however, on his side, I think we need not now be apprehensive of the result ; but the difference will, nevertheless, be great between his retiring to the Rhine with his present force nearly entire, or that force being completely defeated in its present position. I reckon not a little on his obstinacy in endeavouring to maintain that position longer than prudence would warrant. By a return which I have seen, the French armies have lost in the field and by sickness not less than 150,000 men since the re-commencement of hostilities. The French force now in Germany may amount to about 200,000 men.

Parliament meets on the 4th of November. We intend to raise as much money as we can before Christmas, and likewise to adopt the measures which may be judged, upon the whole, most advisable for keeping up our army to its present amount. Nothing is yet finally decided on this point. The subject is under consideration. When these measures are passed, together with the usual annual votes, we had some idea of adjourning till the month of March ; but of this intention we think it most prudent to say nothing at present.

I was happy to hear from March so good an account of your health.

Believe me to be, with sincere regards,

Yours very faithfully,

LIVERPOOL.

His judgment respecting the operations in Germany was proved by the event to be as correct as his calculations of the course of the army with which he was better acquainted. The multitude of counsellors, and more especially the

degree in which one of them, on the strength of his imperial rank, took upon himself to dictate to the generals of the different allies in Germany, proved a serious impediment to their success ; while Napoleon's disasters and eventual ruin were caused by that very quality of his disposition on which Lord Liverpool here expressed his reliance, his exceeding obstinacy, which led him to disregard the warnings of prudence and ordinary strategy. Nor (since some writers, thinking to enhance the glory of Wellington, have represented the Ministry as affording him scanty and grudging supplies, and eager to pare down his force to the lowest possible strength) is the resolution announced to maintain his army in undiminished efficiency less deserving of remembrance ; that justice may be done to all, and that, without stripping a leaf from the chaplet of Wellington, the ministers who so lavishly exerted themselves to provide him the means of achieving his mighty deeds may not be defrauded of the credit which is likewise due to them.



## CHAPTER XV.

Necessity for new arrangements caused by the fall of Napoleon—Unreasonableness of our allies—General confidence in the Government—The allies offer to treat—Stubbornness of Napoleon—The Comte d'Artois crosses over to Holland—The Duke of Clarence is present with the allies in the Netherlands—Opening of the Congress at Chatillon—Character of Alexander—Ambitious views of Bernadotte—Lord Liverpool's views on the end most desirable, and on the line to be adopted by the negotiators—Differences among the allies—Dissolution of the Congress—Wellington takes Bordeaux—The citizens at Bordeaux acknowledge Louis XVIII.—Lord Liverpool's letter to Wellington—The French Senate dethrone Napoleon—Elba is assigned to him—Lord Liverpool's language respecting the peace—Moderation of England—The Slave-trade—Erection of the kingdom of the Netherlands.

THE next year was one of universal interest, and, if of unprecedented triumph in the absolute overthrow of him who, while the common enemy of all Europe, had always regarded England with a peculiar animosity and hatred, the very completeness of that triumph brought with it equally unprecedented anxiety to the Cabinet; for Napoleon, in the lawless pride of his power, had trampled on the boundaries and rights of all other nations but our own; and when he was struck down, and it had become indispensable to remedy the confusion which he had created, the existing position of affairs did not permit recourse to be had to the simple expedient of replacing things on their former footing, but it was necessary to remodel, so to say, the whole of Europe on the east of the Rhine, while every step of this reconstitution of the different states imposed on those who

had the chief voice in it the further task of reconciling conflicting interests ; of moderating unreasonable pretensions ; of repressing vanity without offending it ; of silencing covetousness without yielding to it ; and called on them for such an union of extensive knowledge, keen foresight, and sound judgment, of firmness mingled with patient forbearance and calmness of temper, as very few crises in the world's history have afforded equal opportunities to display. That from such an ordeal England came forth with even increased glory was due in an eminent degree to the sagacious statesman whose policy it is the aim of the present work faithfully to narrate, and of his most distinguished colleague, the Secretary of State, to whose great abilities and great virtues his country is at last beginning to do justice.

On no occasion did the situation of England place her on a higher vantage-ground, or enable her to carry out with greater credit the policy so habitual to her that it might almost be called national, of purchasing tranquillity for her allies and the rest of Europe by the unselfish sacrifice of her individual aggrandizement. She had nothing to recover ; for, long and deadly as the strife had been, she had lost nothing. No invading army had occupied her capital ; not one foot of her sovereign's dominions had gone to furnish an appanage for the kinsmen of her foe. On the other hand, no nation which, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, had been arrayed against her, had failed to reap the fruits of its hostility in the loss of colonies and settlements. But nearly all her acquisitions, important as were many of them as outworks to her older possessions, valuable as were others from their fertility or riches, she was willing to cede for the great object for which she had been so long in arms, at so vast an expenditure of treasure and of life, the re-establishment of the peace of Europe on a safe and durable footing. And her self-denying liberality shone forth with the greater lustre from the contrast afforded to it by the ambitious greediness of other nations, which, not

contented with being restored to the possession of what they had been forced to surrender, sought to indemnify themselves for past humiliation by gains which could only be acquired through as unprovoked and flagrant violations of right and justice as those by which they themselves had formerly suffered.

The year, if, as in a memoir of a minister seems reasonable, it be calculated by the meeting of Parliament rather than by the almanac, commenced some weeks before Christmas; and Lord Liverpool and his colleagues began at once to reap the fruit of the energy and sagacity which had hitherto distinguished their policy in the altered tone of the Opposition. Not a year and a half had elapsed since, on their resumption of office, they had been encountered by sneers, disparagement, and open attack, as wholly unfit for the offices which, through accident as it were, had fallen to their share. Now many of those who had then been bitterest in their invectives against them vied with each other in expressions of approbation of their past conduct, and of confidence in their future management. In the debate on the Address the only whisper of objection came from Mr. Whitbread, who, in spite of the manly way in which he had recanted his former condemnation of Wellington, could not yet forget his old animosity to Pitt, nor refrain from asserting, what before his death Fox himself had ceased to believe, that the war had originally been caused by Pitt's policy, and might have been avoided if the advice of his rival had been followed: yet even he terminated his speech by declaring that he no longer wished to see one member of the Cabinet displaced, so satisfied was he with the situation into which they had now brought the affairs of Europe, and with the statesmanlike moderation of their present language and views. And in the House of Lords the language of approval held by the Opposition was unmodified; Lord Grenville coming forward as the spokesman of his party to approve of all that had been and was being done by the Government, and selecting for parti-

cular eulogy the royal speech itself, which was the special composition of the Prime Minister.

Lord Liverpool had good reason to congratulate himself, as he avowed that he did, on the change of feeling thus displayed towards his Administration; and, in expressing his belief that a vigorous continuance of their efforts "might lead to a successful termination of the war," he took occasion to announce the principles which would guide himself and his colleagues in the great task which in that event would lie before them, the re-establishment of the peace of the world on a durable foundation. They were such as could only have been embraced by a Government and nation conscious of their own strength, and of the universal recognition of it by other countries. It was well known that we had no disasters to avenge, no losses to repair, no disgraces to efface. The lust of conquest had never influenced our councils; and, therefore, when the Prime Minister declared that he should look upon it as a national dishonour "to depart from political justice and moderation; from justice not only to our friends but also to our enemies," and expressed his conviction that in exact proportion "as we were more vigorous, it became us to be more moderate," he was giving utterance to a sentiment which, while it was in the highest degree honorable to himself and his colleagues, to whom it belonged to guide the public feeling on this subject, was at the same time received as worthy of themselves by the sympathy and approval of the people in general. It was far, however, from smoothing the labours of the Ministry during the next two eventful years, since it was at direct variance with the spirit which animated our allies, the majority of whom, exemplifying the exact converse of his proposition, now showed a lack of moderation corresponding to their former lack of vigour; and, when their conqueror was at their feet, sought to make diplomacy repair with interest the losses which their military inferiority had brought upon them.

To pacify this combination of revenge and cupidity was not the easiest portion of the work which awaited our negotiators: more than once a resort to arms was threatened, and it seemed far from impossible that in a fresh war we might be driven by our sense of equity to unite with our late enemy against our former allies. That such a catastrophe was prevented was owing chiefly to the combined frankness and steadiness with which the different envoys who on our part were concerned in the negotiation from the first avowed and throughout adhered to the principles thus laid down by the Prime Minister, and to the knowledge which our debates in Parliament impressed upon every foreign prince and council that the wisdom, and vigour, and public virtue which the Ministry had displayed (short, as yet, as had been their tenure of office), had converted their former opponents into supporters, and that Lord Castlereagh, in the arguments which he advanced and in the conditions on which he insisted, was speaking the language not of one party, but of an unanimous nation.

On the 5th of November, the day after Parliament had re-assembled, Wellington had resumed his operations against Soult, which a long period of stormy weather had compelled him to suspend; and within a week had turned the French marshal's position, and, driving him with heavy loss from his lines on the Nivelle and Nive, had forced him back upon Bayonne: and the same week the allied sovereigns of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, whose armies had reached Frankfort, and were preparing to cross the Rhine, despatched a messenger to Napoleon with an offer to treat for peace on terms which would have left him not only secure possession of the throne, but master of a territory such as had belonged to no French monarch since the time of Charlemagne: all his conquests between the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine he was at liberty to retain; and the messenger was even authorised to add that England would make considerable sacrifices on points relating to

commerce and navigation, to which it was known that he attached especial importance. Never was the adage which affirms that God deprives of their judgment those on whose downfall He has resolved more conspicuously verified than in Napoleon's conduct on this occasion. He was not required to give up a single foot of land which he still possessed. He was to be left in possession of large provinces to which France had no claim but that of recent conquest, and of which the events of the last campaign were sufficient to convince every one that a few more months of warfare must inevitably deprive him. Nor was it a secret that the French nation was as eager for peace as those who thus proffered it. The greatest distress reigned throughout every part of France: and while statesmen and magistrates pressed upon Napoleon the necessity of peace as affording the only prospect of relief to the people from their misery, his officers urged on him similar advice for military reasons; pointing out how surely the same preponderance of numbers on the part of the allies, which had brought on him the crushing defeats of the past year, must prove equally irresistible in the year which was approaching. Yet he obstinately set himself against proposals which all but himself saw to afford the only chance of his preservation. Even he could not venture openly to reject them; but he evaded giving a reply to them as long as he could, and interposed delay after delay in the way of every measure calculated to give them effect. The allies crossed the Rhine, and established themselves on French ground; and the same day he, with the most violent expressions of indignation, dissolved the Legislative Assembly for imploring him to restore peace to the country.

Nor, even after he had given an apparent assent to the conditions which the allies had laid down as the indispensable and unalterable preliminaries of the negotiation, and when, after another month's delay, he had at last empowered an envoy to meet the ministers of the allies, and

to discuss with them the terms of the treaty, would have furnished that envoy, though the most trusted and the most trustworthy of all his advisers, with full powers. He required the negotiators to await his own decision on every detail : and the vacillation and caprice with which he alternately gave and withdrew his consent to different articles showed, too plainly for his own most zealous friends to doubt it, that he sought rather to amuse the allies than to agree with them ; and that if, while military operations were still going on, a single chance of war should turn in his favour, he would at once break off the discussion, and once more trust all to the arbitrement of the sword.

Our ministers, who estimated his character and designs more truly than those who had had greater personal experience of his pertinacity and his faithlessness, were more disappointed than surprised at the reception with which these overtures were met. Meanwhile the passage of the Rhine by the Russian and German hosts, and the establishment of invading armies on both sides of France, began to suggest to the exiled family of the Bourbons and their partisans hopes which could only be realised if Napoleon rejected every condition which might be offered him. His establishment in the southern provinces had given Wellington an opportunity of learning something of the feelings of the French inhabitants of the district ; and he soon formed an opinion which he expressed to the ministers at home that it might prove a most successful stroke of policy to put forward one of the Bourbon princes. With this opinion he, towards the close of 1813, on his own responsibility, permitted the Comte de Grammont, an officer who was serving in his army, to go to England as an emissary from the Royalist party in France ; even before that officer arrived in London, intelligence which reached the princes through other channels had determined them to venture a blow for themselves, and the Comte d'Artois sought an interview with Lord Liverpool on the sub-



ject, which was thus reported by the latter in a memorandum which he drew up for the information of his colleagues :

*Memorandum by the Earl of Liverpool to be laid before the Ministry.*

*Most secret.*

January 4th, 1814.

I have seen this morning his Royal Highness Monsieur, who returned from Hartwell yesterday, after a communication with his brother, Louis XVIII., and his two sons, the Duc d'Angoulême and Duc de Berry, on the subject of the memorandum delivered by Lord Wellington to the Comte de Grammont, for the purpose of being shown to Louis XVIII.

Before we entered upon the subject which had given rise to the appointment, I stated to Monsieur that I was desirous of informing him that, by letters received from the head-quarters of the allies at Freiburg, dated the 19th ult., it appeared that a counter revolution had taken place in the Canton of Berne, that the allies had, in consequence, been invited to pass the Rhine, and to march into Switzerland; that General de Watteville, who commanded the Swiss troops, had consented to their advance; and that Prince Schwartzenberg intended to begin the passage of the Rhine on the 20th, with an army of 150,000 men, issuing at the same time a proclamation that the allies, in passing into France through Switzerland, acknowledged the independence of that country, and engaged not to lay down their arms till its ancient independence and its ancient limits were secured. I added that I was particularly anxious that this important event should be known to him before we began our conversation upon other matters, as it must tend, in a great measure, to alter the opinion which I knew he had entertained, that Austria was not really faithful to the alliance, but was all this time ready (provided she could obtain her own conditions) to make a separate peace, that I could assure him that this operation was in a considerable degree to be ascribed to the Austrian councils; and I would leave it to his judgment to decide whether, if Austria had been pursuing her own personal objects, she would not rather have looked to operations in Italy on a more extensive scale, than to a distant operation in

the interior of France. He admitted the truth of the observation, and received the communication with strong marks of satisfaction.

Monsieur then entered upon the subject on which we had met. He said he had had a full conversation with his brother and two sons in consequence of Lord Wellington's memorandum and the Comte de Grammont's mission; that all that had passed, however, on this subject was confined to themselves, and had not been made known to any individual attached to them. He said that he considered Lord Wellington's memorandum as furnishing additional proof from the highest authority of that of which they had had indisputable evidence before, that the dispositions of the people in France were in favour of the re-establishment of the House of Bourbon, and that they desired only the appearance of a prince of that House to induce them to declare in his favour; that I was already apprised of his sentiments as to what they considered as their duty under present circumstances, previous to the arrival of the Comte de Grammont; and, that even if a doubt could have existed of what they owed to their own honour and to France, previous to this event, they could have now no hesitation in declaring that it was their indispensable duty to comply with the wishes which had been expressed from so many quarters, and to embark with as little delay as possible for some part of France. That the arrangements which had been approved by Louis XVIII. were as follows: That the Duc d'Angoulême and the Duc de Berri should embark on board a ship of war, or, in case that could not be granted, on board the *pacquet-boat* for Passages, and that, upon arriving there, they should put themselves in communication with Lord Wellington. That it was Monsieur's intention to embark on board a frigate, or, if that could not be granted, a vessel which he had the means of hiring, and to sail directly for the Garonne. That he **knew** there was a party in Bordeaux ready to support him, and that he had not the least doubt of being received and supported by them as soon as he landed in the neighbourhood. That if our engagements with our allies prevented our giving them that active assistance in this business which they were so desirous of obtaining, they limited their application to a demand for

passports for the Dukes of Angoulême and Berri, either under their own names or under fictitious names, to embark on board the packet-boat for Passages, and a licence for the ship in which Monsieur intended to go to Bordeaux.

As soon as Monsieur had concluded, I began by reminding him that when I last saw him, which was only two hours after the copy of the memorandum from Lord Wellington to the Comte de Grammont had been put into my hands, I had explicitly stated to him my personal opinion that the British Government could not, under present circumstances, further or assist the proposition which I was aware would be grounded on that memorandum. That we were so circumstanced with respect to our allies, that we should not be justified in taking such a step without their previous consent, or without such manifestation of public opinion by an actual rising in France as might warrant us, from what we previously knew of their sentiments and opinions, in acting without the delay which would unavoidably arise from a reference to them. That I could now state it as the opinion of my colleagues (in which I included that of Lord Castlereagh, for I had received his opinion in writing), that neither our engagements nor our honour would permit our adopting at this moment the proposal which he had made. That the connexion which subsisted between us and our allies necessarily required previous communication with them on a measure of such importance, but that this communication was rendered still more indispensable from the negotiations to which we were jointly parties. That if he asked my opinion as to the result of those negotiations, I did not believe they would end in peace. That the allies would certainly not have made peace at Frankfort upon the same terms as they would have made it at Prague, nor would they, in my judgment, make it at Besançon or Dijon upon the same terms as they would have concluded it at Frankfort; but that, as they had admitted the principle of treating with Buonaparte, it was in his power to have peace by accepting their conditions, though, from what we knew of his character, the acceptance of them was very improbable. That, whilst we could not agree to the measure he proposed without previous communication with our allies, we were ready to communicate without delay all that had passed

on this subject to them, for their consideration ; to desire their favorable attention to it in the event of the negotiation being either broken off, or any disposition appearing on the part of Buonaparte to evade peace on the only admissible principles. That we should be ready to concert with them upon the measures which it might be proper to adopt with a view to the interior of France ; and that Louis XVIII. and Monsieur should be fully informed of the result of this communication. That all therefore that we now suggested was a short delay till we could receive an answer from Lord Castlereagh. That this delay appeared to me to be likely even to be advantageous to him ; it would enable Lord Wellington to procure further information ; and they must be aware that much might be done by Lord Wellington in the present state of things, both towards learning and trying the opinion of the country, which he might be obliged to give up altogether, if a French prince should once arrive against the declared opinion of the Government. That I conjured him not to put us under the painful necessity of giving an instruction to Lord Wellington to abstain from any communication with them in the event of their arrival in France ; an instruction which it would be most distressing to us to be obliged to send, and which might in its results produce the most unfavorable impression upon their own cause. I added that, having formed this opinion after mature deliberation, I was sure he would see how impossible it was for us to assist indirectly and covertly a project which we felt it our duty to oppose till the sentiments of our allies had been obtained, and that we felt, therefore, the same painful necessity in rejecting his second proposition as we had done in rejecting the first.

Monsieur thanked me for the frankness with which I had explained myself. He said it was most painful for his brother and for him to differ on such a subject with a Government to whom they owed so many obligations, and to which they were bound by so many ties. That we certainly were the best judges of what our honour or our engagements to our allies required, but that their honour was likewise concerned in this business, and that they should not feel that they were justified either to themselves or to their country if, after such an intimation of the

wishes of the French people, they did not immediately repair to the place where their duty obliged them to go. That all they therefore asked was their passports and their licence, under real or fictitious names, that we might certainly give what instructions we pleased to Lord Wellington, and if those instructions prohibited him from communicating with them they would certainly abstain from such communication, and try their fortunes in other ways; but that, whatever were the consequences, they should in that case feel that they had done their duty. He further added that in going to France, however improbable might be the chance of peace at this time, and he certainly thought so after what I had said, they were fully sensible that circumstances might arise in which it might be concluded with Buonaparte; and that they should think themselves most unjustifiable in going to France for the purpose of exciting the people to rise in their favour, unless they had entirely made up their minds, even in the event of a peace, not to abandon them, but to share the fortunes of those who declared in their favour, whatever they might be.

I again urged the advantage of delay: that, though we differed now, events might arise, and very shortly, which might lead us entirely to agree; that even the public declaration of such a town as Bordeaux in favour of the royal cause would in a great degree alter the question; and that, whatever might be the policy of our Government in such an event, which must depend upon circumstances, it might remove any objection to his going in person, as in that case he would not appear to go by our sanction to excite the people to rise against the Government, but he would go to those who had taken the measure upon their own responsibility, and who were desirous of having him amongst them.

To this he replied that it was the universal opinion of all those with whom they had communicated, that there never would be an actual rising in France till a prince actually arrived, and that it would take place as soon as he was known to be upon French territory.

At the conclusion of our conversation he asked me whether they should receive the passports and licence for which they applied.

the Government, with the view

which they had taken on the subject, would be justified in giving them; that they would certainly impose no personal indignity upon them, but they would not be justified in giving facilities until such time as the communication with the allies had taken place.

He then at first intimated, and afterwards plainly stated, that in that case his sons would go to Falmouth to embark on board the packet for Passages. That they were aware they could not embark without a passport, but, upon being refused permission to embark, it would be necessary for the King and them to publish to the whole world the actual state of the case, and to make it known to France, and to Europe, that it was not their fault that they were not actually in France, but that they were prevented from going by the act of the British Government.

Monseigneur said this without anything like the appearance of menace; and indeed I must do him the justice to say that his manner throughout, though earnest, and on some occasions very affecting, was such as I have universally experienced from him, and that he was as candid as I could have expected any individual could be with the strong feelings which he possessed on the subject of our conversation.

In a note which he addressed to the Count the next day he reported to him as the joint decision of the whole Cabinet the same opinion which he had himself expressed on the spur of the moment, that "they considered themselves precluded in the present state of things from acceding to his demands without previous communication with the rest of the allies." And as it was probable that Alexander, and almost certain that the Emperor of Austria, would countenance no step of which the avowed object was to depose Napoleon, the Count abandoned the idea of obtaining the sanction of any potentate, and, taking a passage in an ordinary vessel, crossed over to Holland in the beginning of February.

Since the abdication by Louis Buonaparte of the kingly authority which Napoleon had conferred on him, that



country and the Netherlands had been formally incorporated with the French empire. But the last campaign had expelled Napoleon's troops from the eastern provinces; and, for some weeks before the Bourbon prince landed at Rotterdam, a vigorous effort had been making by a combined English and Prussian force, of which the English division was under Sir Thomas Graham, to drive them from the western fortresses; the two principal of which, Antwerp and Bergen-op-Zoom, were towns of extraordinary strength. One or two of the inferior places were reduced with comparative ease; but an attack which Graham planned and executed upon Bergen-op-Zoom failed in a most extraordinary manner; our troops first making themselves completely masters of the place, and then, through a series of accidents and great mismanagement, allowing themselves to be driven out again with very heavy loss: while against Antwerp the allies were wholly unsuccessful. Carnot, who had earned an unenviable notoriety in the worst days of the Revolution, had adhered with such obstinacy to his republican principles that he had refused all employment from Napoleon, whether Consul or Emperor; but now that foreign enemies were invading France he, though by this time an old man, came forward to offer his services to his country, and Napoleon, recollecting his old skill as an engineer, gladly accepted his assistance, and sent him to Antwerp as governor. He had lost but little of his former energy, and none of his professional skill and fertility of resource. He speedily not only rendered the city impregnable to any force which was likely at present to be brought against it, but, having recourse to means similar to the expedients with which Arçon thirty years before had sought to protect his batteries at Gibraltar, he enabled the ships also which lay in the harbour to defy the bombardment which was aimed at them. The attack was witnessed by one of our princes, the Duke of Clarence, who had recently crossed to the seat of war, and who forwarded his opinions to Lord Liverpool in the following letter, to which the



position subsequently attained by the writer lends additional interest.

British Head-Quarters, February 6th, 1814.

MY DEAR LORD,

I was so suddenly called away by Sir Thomas Graham that it was not in my power at the time to inform your Lordship. I must ever regret the fleet was not burnt; but at the same time the ships, without the greatest repairs, will never be able to put to sea. Two entire days and part of a third were dedicated to the most perfect and unmolested practice of our artillery against the ships and buildings. We ought to have been crowned with success, for every exertion was made, and all ranks tried who could most do their duty; our loss, thank God, has been but small; and Sir Thomas Graham did all in his power, and was well seconded by those under him. Being, therefore, perfectly satisfied with the Commander-in-chief and his gallant officers and men, I remain with the British army on the march, and shall continue with them at least four-and-twenty hours after they are in their permanent quarters. Before I return to the Hague I shall pay a visit to the Duke of Saxe Weimar, if he is at Breda. I shall, however, write as circumstances arise, and, if anything should prevent my returning to the Hague directly, you shall hear from me; but I am determined to proceed to those places only where my reception is secure and proper.

Adieu, and ever believe me, my dear Lord,

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM.

His Royal Highness, however, did not carry out the plans which he thus announced. At the same time that his letter reached England intelligence arrived that the Prussian commander, Bulow, had received orders to quit the Netherlands and join the main army, which required every bayonet that could be mustered while forcing its way into the heart of France. The duke had gone to Holland without consulting any one, and the ministers foresaw the possibility of such inconvenience if he should

follow Bulow to head-quarters, where there were far too many princes already, that they represented to the Prince Regent the advisability of summoning him back to England. Though Bulow's departure, of course, left Graham too weak to undertake any operations of importance, yet he still continued to blockade Antwerp: but it was in France itself that the contest could alone be decided, and matters were proceeding so rapidly across the frontier that victory or defeat before a Flemish fortress was disregarded, and absolutely lost sight of, in presence of the great events which every despatch was announcing as taking place almost daily between the frontier and Paris.

Unless Napoleon were prepared to declare to the French nation, which was even more weary of the war, and far more exhausted by it, than the rest of Europe, that he was resolved to maintain it, in spite of their avowed feelings, for objects purely personal to himself, it was impossible for him to refuse all discussion of the terms on which the allies had offered to make peace. He had probably fancied that, by the lukewarmness which he had shown on the subject, he should increase their eagerness to treat; but in this he had deceived himself. He had only impressed them more than ever with the idea of the necessity of imposing on him terms which he should not find it easy to violate. The disinclination to treat which he had evinced proved, in their eyes, a love of war for its own sake, and imposed on them the duty of preventing him from renewing it hereafter with such resources as he had formerly enjoyed. And every part of his conduct during the first three months of the year confirmed them in this opinion of what the world had a right to require of them. As, however, he could not with decency reject the overtures that had been made to him, at length, after nearly three months' delay, he authorised his most trusted minister, Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, to meet the plenipotentiaries of England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, in a congress which was opened at Chatillon

in the first week of February, though even then he withheld from his envoy the full powers which the other sovereigns had entrusted to their ministers, commanding him to refer every proposal which he received to himself ; so that it was plain that his principal objects were still delay and evasion. After the negotiators met, his conduct, if such an expression may be used of a man endowed with so many qualities of greatness, was childish, if not worse, and showed more plainly than even his former backwardness how tenaciously he adhered to his preference for war. When all his prospects of long making an effectual resistance to the superior numbers of the hosts which were hemming him in seemed annihilated by his defeats at La Rothière, he consented to invest Caulaincourt with the character of a plenipotentiary. In less than a fortnight, elated by the advantages which he had gained in two or three smaller actions, which, indeed, had proved once more, what no one doubted, the immeasurable superiority of his military genius to the hardy unskilfulness of Blucher or the pedantic deliberation of Schwartzemberg, but which were on too limited a scale to have any real influence on the issue of the campaign, he recalled those powers, and allowed himself to indulge in language which he knew would be repeated, and probably wished to come to the ears of the allies, indicating his belief that they were still in greater danger from him than he from them.

Such a disposition on his part prevented any one from entertaining very sanguine hopes of peace while he should continue on the French throne, though it was not doubted that Caulaincourt himself was sincere in his eagerness to conclude a treaty, and steadfast in his opinion that the issue of this or that action could make no difference in the character of the policy which was not only desirable for his nation, but indispensable for the safety of his master. In addition to the British plenipotentiaries,<sup>1</sup> Lord Castle-

<sup>1</sup> The plenipotentiaries of the foreign Powers were : for Austria, Count Stadion ; for Russia, Count de Razamousky ; for Prussia,

reagh himself was present at all the earlier conferences, indeed as long as there seemed any prospect of bringing them to a satisfactory conclusion. For, unusual as it was for a Secretary of State to leave the kingdom, the crisis was so peculiar, and the questions which might arise between the negotiators were so manifold and various, while at the same time they often required so instant a decision, that it was thought desirable that there should be a member of the Cabinet on the spot who should possess the confidence of his colleagues sufficiently to be empowered to decide everything conclusively that might seem to call for so rapid a judgment. Lord Castlereagh had taken Basle on his way in order to have a preliminary conference with the Austrian and Prussian sovereigns and ministers and the Emperor Alexander. But he was probably not sorry that the potentate last named had quitted the town before his arrival. For the activity of Alexander's mind was very far beyond its capacity, and his idea of his importance as the sovereign of the country whose defeated invasion was the most visible cause of Napoleon's difficulties was so exaggerated, that he seemed to claim acquiescence in the wildest schemes merely because they were suggested by himself, and expected deference to his wishes to override established usage and manifest propriety. Lord Castlereagh had a sufficient specimen of his arrogant temper while on his journey. As he wrote to Lord Liverpool, "He received a confidential communication before he reached Basle that the Emperor of Russia desired to see him immediately on his arrival, before he had any communication with any other Court or any of his own ministers, being desirous of personally opening to Lord Castlereagh his sentiments on the present state of

Baron Humboldt. Great Britain had three ; Lord Aberdeen, Lord Cathcart, and Lord Castlereagh's brother, Sir C. Stewart : but, in the presence of the Foreign Secretary himself, they, of course, possessed no actual authority, in spite of their formal appointments as plenipotentiaries.

affairs." He was compelled to reply "that his duty would be on his arrival to notify himself officially to the ministers of the three Powers," and though he could not well refuse to wait upon the Emperor after he had done so, he had certainly reason, when he learnt the views which Alexander had apparently desired to urge upon him separately and privately, to be glad that he was forewarned of them. To his astonishment he learnt that Alexander was desirous not only to dethrone Napoleon, but to establish another mere soldier in his place, of incomparably inferior reputation, Bernadotte, whom a strange freak of fortune had already raised to the rank of Crown Prince of Sweden;<sup>1</sup> and to whom that very elevation had suggested still more ambitious hopes. In the unrestrained conversations which the Emperor's departure enabled him to have with the prime minister of Austria, Prince Metternich, he learnt, what indeed he would have divined without such express information, that to insist on such an idea would be not unlikely to make Austria abandon the alliance, though in his views of general policy the Emperor Francis was more moderate and less disposed to allow personal feelings to guide him than Lord Castlereagh had probably expected. In spite of his having given his daughter to Napoleon, Lord Castlereagh reported to Lord Liverpool that he did not intend to raise "any objection, should the French nation think fit to restore the ancient dynasty," while Metternich's language as to his own personal feelings and judgment was that "if a wish could decide between the alternatives [of either forcing the best possible peace on Napoleon, and

<sup>1</sup> In May 1810, Prince Augustenberg, who, by the treaty made between Russia and Sweden in 1809, had been declared heir to the Swedish throne, died of apoplexy; and as the reigning sovereign, Charles XIII., was the last of his family, it became necessary for the States of Sweden to appoint him another successor, who should found a new dynasty. Bernadotte, who was at that time commanding a French army on the shores of the Baltic, was popular in Sweden, and in September 1810 he was elected Crown Prince, and formally adopted by the old King as his son.

preserving it by a defensive union when made, or of letting the government of France devolve to its ancient and legitimate sovereigns, unconnected equally with any of the allies, and likely to be too weak for years to molest any of them], he could not hesitate to prefer the Bourbons." With this view Castlereagh entirely coincided; as did Lord Liverpool himself, whose views on the whole question of peace were expressed, a day or two after the formal opening of the conferences at Chatillon, to Wellington in the following letter:

Fife House, February 9th, 1814.

MY DEAR LORD,

I enclose for your information a copy of a private letter from Lord Castlereagh, written after his first communications at Basle with the Austrian and Prussian Governments.

The Emperor of Russia and his minister were in advance at Vesoul, and he had not therefore an opportunity of personally knowing their sentiments upon the points to which this letter refers.

As far as we have been able to judge of the disposition of the people of France, in the eastern provinces of that country, which are now occupied by the allies, and which include Lorraine, Alsace, Franche-Comté, Burgundy, part of the Lyonnais, and part of Champagne, there appears to be a general abhorrence of the tyranny of Buonaparte, but there has not yet been manifested any sentiment whatever towards the Bourbons. The only part of France in which we have heard of any disposition of this nature (except in the districts occupied by the army under your command) is in the lower part of Brittany, and in that district which was formerly denominated La Vendée; and even here the sentiment is by no means so prevalent as might have been expected, considering the tremendous conflict which subsisted for so considerable a length of time in that country.

At the same time I should not be surprised, if the allies were so fortunate as to obtain another battle of Lepsie at Chalons, that the French nation would feel the advantage of returning to an order of things which would be more satisfactory to the

allied Powers than any other which could be adopted, and would certainly give to the French nation, and to Europe, the best chance of what they all want, a lasting peace.

The extreme imprudence of the French princes renders any secret communication with them very hazardous. Could you have believed it possible that, when the Prince Regent visited the Comte d'Artois, a few days before his departure for Switzerland, in consequence of his being confined by the gout, and chose to say civil things to him about his present prospects and the re-establishment of his brother on the throne of France, that the whole of what was said by the Prince upon that occasion was published verbatim in one of the morning papers a few days after?

I can understand their wishing to commit us to their cause if possible, but they must have known that words of that sort mean nothing, and that the publication of them could have no other effect than to mark their own imprudence.

I think that many weeks, and perhaps even days, cannot elapse before we hear of a great battle having taken place between the allied armies and the French in the neighbourhood of Châlons. The reports from our officers at head-quarters are very encouraging. I confess I wish, however, that the line of operations of the allies was not so extended.

If the allies should gain a great battle in their present situation, either Buonaparte's power will be overturned, or he will be obliged to accept the terms of peace which they may think proper to dictate.

The belief at Paris I know to be that he will not return alive unless as conqueror.

If, on the other hand, the allies should receive a check, the advantages which they possess in numbers, in the discipline of their troops, in their artillery, and particularly in their cavalry, will probably enable them to make a retreat which the enemy would find great difficulty in materially impeding; and in the situation in which Buonaparte now is, with the conscription resisted throughout a great part of the country, without any national enthusiasm in his favour, and with all payments to the civil and ecclesiastical servants of Government suspended, he will probably be too glad to avail himself of such an opportunity to agree to peace.



I do not see, therefore, at present any probability of the continuance of the war, unless some dissension should arise amongst the allies; and though there are certainly seeds of disunion in this as well as in all other great alliances, I am not apprehensive that they would break out under such circumstances so as to prevent the conclusion of peace, though I think they might in some degree affect the terms of it.

I have thus fully explained to you my views of our present prospects. We are thoroughly satisfied that the weather and state of the roads have been impediments to your advancing.

If the money which has now been sent shall enable you to equip the Spaniards, and you can safely take a much more forward position in the country, great advantages might arise from it, even in the event of peace. The period between a preliminary and a definitive treaty is always critical, and the French would either have to negotiate with great disadvantage, the allied armies being in possession of a considerable part of their territory, or they must purchase the evacuation of it by some such sacrifice as Buonaparte exacted at Marengo; that, is by a preliminary surrender of some strong places.

Believe me to be, my dear Lord,

Yours very faithfully,

LIVERPOOL.

To the MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON.

The policy of our Government, as we see from this letter, was clear and decided: peace with France under any government which she herself might choose, provided it was one which the allies could trust for faithfully observing the conditions. Nor were the secret wishes in favour of the legitimate dynasty entertained by Lord Liverpool and Metternich, nor their belief that better faith might be expected from the Bourbons than from Napoleon, suffered to weaken their recognition of the fact that Napoleon, as the ruler chosen by the French people, had a right to expect them to treat with him in that capacity, nor to interfere with the perfect frankness and fairness of their dealing with his envoy. And again in the same letter we

see the same power, very rare among civilians, of accurately calculating the chances and effects of military operations even on the most extended scale : for the anticipations expressed of the different consequences of any check received by either side were very remarkably and precisely verified in the different actions which took place during the next month, and in which the very circumstances that Lord Liverpool here enumerates prevented Napoleon from gaining any permanent advantage from the brilliant successes which his superiority of skill enabled him to achieve, while the first great disaster which he himself sustained overturned his power.

Parliament, which had adjourned before Christmas till the 1st of March, again postponed its meeting till the end of the month at the express command of the Prince Regent, for the reason which, though not expressed, was universally understood and admitted, namely, the inconvenience which might arise from unseasonable questions being put to the Ministry while so important a negotiation as that at Chatillon was going forward. To approve of so protracted an adjournment was of course to express full confidence in the sound judgment and good management of the Cabinet ; and even those who thought the precaution of adjourning on such grounds superfluous agreed in energetically proclaiming the trust which they reposed in the ministers' conduct of the negotiation. The conferences, as is well known, proved fruitless ; but even their unsatisfactory termination served to show how desirable it had been that no interference of any extraneous body to complicate matters by unseasonable comments should be possible. They broke off because Napoleon finally refused to cede his conquests, though every one of the territories for which he held out, except Antwerp, had been already wrested from him, and was occupied by the armies of his enemies ; and Antwerp was so isolated that it and its garrison were practically as much lost to him as Spain. But, long before Caulaincourt gave in his last demand, in which,

besides insisting on the retention of Antwerp, Flanders, and the frontier of the Rhine, he also demanded Italy and the Ionian Islands for Eugène Beauharnais, principalities for his sisters, and the restoration of the conquered colonies of France by England, the allies had nearly quarrelled among themselves; and nothing but the prudence and force of character of Lord Castlereagh had prevented the silly schemes and pretensions of the Emperor Alexander from dissolving the alliance.<sup>1</sup>

It is not worth while to follow in detail the steps of an abortive negotiation. After a sitting of six weeks the Congress was finally dissolved on the 21st of March; and it is the more strange that even Napoleon with all his obstinacy should have allowed matters to come to such a point, because, though he was himself by the superiority of his genius keeping the events of the campaign on a footing of tolerable equality in the north, in the south Wellington's superiority to Soult was as marked and undeniable as his own advantage over Blücher, and was productive of far more decisive results. The French marshal was driven from one strong position to another; river after river was crossed in spite of all his efforts; he received one signal and decisive defeat in a pitched battle at Orthez; a week before the plenipotentiaries separated the great city of Bordeaux was occupied by a British division; and, a still more ominous sign of the future, the citizens and municipal authorities publicly discarded the emblems of the Republic, replaced the tricolor by the white ensign of the Bourbons, and received the Duc d'Angoulême with eagerness as governor of the city in the name of Louis XVIII. Another letter from Lord Liverpool to the warrior whose

<sup>1</sup> February 16th Lord Bathurst writes, "Lord Castlereagh's arrival at head quarters was of great use. He has at least prevented a quarrel between the two Emperors. That of Russia disliked both Napoleon and the old family. He has just suspended the negotiations." "Castlereagh has left Chatillon for Troyes, where the two Emperors and I believe the King of Prussia, are."

exploits had led to this strange revolution expresses his feelings on the subject :

Fife House, 24th March, 1814.

MY DEAR LORD,

I am much obliged to you for your letter, which I received a few days ago by Major Freemantle. We have since received your letters of the 14th, with the important intelligence of the occupation of Bordeaux by a division of your army under Marshal Beresford, and of the declaration of the civil authorities and people of that city in favour of the House of Bourbon.

I shall direct a copy of the instructions which have been sent in consequence to Lord Castlereagh to be forwarded to you.

The case which has arisen has been foreseen from the beginning as possible ; and, as far as was practicable, provision has been made for it.

At a meeting of the ministers of the allied sovereigns at Langres, on the 29th of January, when they settled the principles on which they were ready to negotiate with Buonaparte, Lord Castlereagh declared, that though he was ready to negotiate and conclude peace with Buonaparte on the part of his Government as the sovereign *de facto* of France, yet, if anything should occur in the course of the negotiations to call his power in question, he reserved to himself the right of suspending the negotiations, or of adopting such course as, according to circumstances, might then be expedient.

That the declaration of the second or third city in France, as Bordeaux may be said to be, in favour of the Bourbons, combined with the account you have given us of a similar sentiment pervading the adjoining country, does in a *degree* call Buonaparte's power in question, cannot be denied. The question altogether is one of *degree*. Every effort of this nature must have a beginning ; a more promising one could not have been expected, and it remains to be seen to what extent it spreads.

Whilst we are determined, however, under present circumstances, to keep off the conclusion of any treaty of peace with Buonaparte, we must endeavour to manage our allies. Our decision may at first alarm them. I entertain confident expectations

that they will be reconciled to it, if the preliminaries shall not actually have been signed before they receive the communications of yesterday. If the preliminaries shall have been signed upon our own terms, the business will be more difficult ; and their decision will very probably then depend upon the *degree* in which the spirit which has manifested itself at Bordeaux extends itself. At all events much will be done by gaining time ; and I am sure you will see the importance of furnishing us with the most early information on the following points : First, on the progress of the Royalist spirit throughout the south and other parts of France within your observation or cognisance. Secondly, the resources which the country can afford for the support and furtherance of that cause. Thirdly, what would be the prospect of ultimate success if the other allied Powers were to withdraw from the contest, either by making a separate peace, or by retiring with their armies to the frontier, and Great Britain should be left to carry it on, unsupported by any Power except the nations of the Peninsula and the Royalists themselves. The last alternative is one which must be most seriously considered.

If the Austrians were determined either on withdrawing from the interior of France, or on making their separate peace, the Russians and Prussians would never attempt to preserve their present station ; and we should then have to decide whether we would make peace jointly with the allies, or continue the war in France, under such circumstances, in support of the Royalist cause.

I have not the least apprehension of the Emperor of Austria being actuated by any tenderness towards Buonaparte on account of the connexion with his daughter. I can even say that, in my judgment, he has been disposed to act more fairly about the Bourbons than either of the other great military Powers. But the Austrians of all descriptions, military and political, dread the power of France, and with resources far more considerable, and a better organized military system, than either Russia or Prussia, they want the spirit of enterprise and self confidence which belongs in a very considerable degree to both the other Powers.

We shall wait with the most anxious solicitude for the next intel-

ligence from you; and we must only now hope (as so considerable a portion of territory and population has already committed itself against Buonaparte) that the flame will extend itself so widely, as to leave no doubt of the insufficiency of Buonaparte to answer for the French nation.

I have thus communicated to you freely my sentiments on the present most singular and important crisis. I have no apprehension of any difficulties in Parliament at present, whatever may exist hereafter, if the line of policy adopted by the Government should prove unsuccessful.

Believe me to be, with great truth, my dear Lord,

Very sincerely yours,

LIVERPOOL.

*To the* MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON.

On such a matter the opinion of the Prime Minister was of course the opinion of the Cabinet, as the declaration to which he alludes as having been made by Lord Castlereagh two months before had also been. But even yet he did not feel justified in resolving that under no circumstances would he consent to a treaty which should leave Napoleon on the throne. His reasons were of a twofold character: in spite of the confidence which he deservedly placed in the Emperor of Austria's fidelity to his engagements, he knew that those in his employ were holding language which implied a belief on their part that he would be forced to change his policy;<sup>1</sup> and again, as long as the position of affairs in the North depended on the daily chances of the campaign, it was impossible to feel assured that Napoleon might not find some occasion of

<sup>1</sup> "The language of the Austrian minister, Count Meervelt, now here, is strong in expressing the reluctance of the Emperor of Austria to join in every hostile step which has been taken since the entrance of the allied armies into France." — *Diary of Lord Colchester*, ii. 477, March 24. The stronger Lord Liverpool's belief was that these were not the Emperor's real sentiments, the more did it, perhaps, seem that an envoy who thus misrepresented him felt assured that he would be compelled by circumstances to act according to the judgment or wishes of others rather than according to his own.



dealing a deadly blow on some one of the generals opposed to him which might paralyse or dissolve the whole alliance. At the moment that Lord Liverpool was writing, Napoleon was retreating towards the Rhine, in the hope of finding such an opportunity while the allies were pursuing him, as he never doubted that they would do, and as, if Alexander's counsels had been followed, they would have done. For that prince, though he had no military experience or skill, had an insatiable appetite for dictating plans and operations to professional soldiers. And if a decisive victory should again place Napoleon on a footing with respect to his German enemies which might give him ever so slight an appearance of equality with them, it was morally certain that the terror of him, which even their hatred had not been able to eradicate, would prompt them either to make separate treaties with him, or to put an almost irresistible pressure on Britain to join in concluding one which would leave him on the throne. Fortunately some of the Russian generals were better strategists than their sovereign, and were able to put their recommendations to march at once on Paris into a form sufficiently gratifying to his vanity. And thus, while Wellington was pressing upwards, and driving Soult from one position to another upon Toulouse, the grand army was beating back Marmont and Mortier before it, not indeed by the superior skill of its commanders, but by the equally resistless weight of overwhelming numbers.

It is almost idle to call the operations which ensued battles. Each day inflicted on the French losses which were irremediable, at an expense of life in the allied armies which in such hosts was never felt. Before Napoleon learnt that his scheme of tempting them to pursue him towards the Rhine had failed, its failure had rendered the preservation of the capital hopeless; and he soon found that the loss of his capital entailed the loss of his throne. In vain he tried every expedient of imperial assumption and diplomatic ingenuity. He was will



negotiate : his victorious enemies refused to treat with him, inferring, from the temper with which he had rejected every offer only a fortnight before, how little chance there was of his remaining faithful to any terms to which he might now agree a day longer than he felt the pressure of instant danger and necessity. He was willing to abdicate in favour of his son : they would not hear of his son, and had now a simpler way of effecting a vacancy of the throne than that of hampering themselves with a conditional abdication. The French Senate itself passed a formal vote of dethronement against him ; and, after that, the only question for the allies to consider was what should be his future destiny. Unhappily Lord Castlereagh was not with the victorious armies. He had been for some weeks at Dijon, where the Emperor Francis, with Metternich and other foreign statesmen, was awaiting the course of events ; and his presence there had on more than one occasion been found very serviceable in its influence on the counsels of Austria. There was, therefore, no one of sufficient weight at Paris to counterbalance the influence of the Czar, or of sufficient authority to check his ill-considered schemes. Relieved from the restraint of the British minister's superior ability and force of character, Alexander, weak, vain, and pompous, assumed the chief credit of the present state of affairs, as if he himself had conquered Napoleon, and was ambitious of adding to it the further glory of a forgiving generosity. He had not the sagacity to see that there are situations in which to cast aside distrust is mere imbecility, or that wonder is not always admiration. Dazzled by the prospect which he thus presented to himself of, to use his own words, "giving an illustrious example to the universe of liberality to a prostrate enemy," he first invited Napoleon to accept an asylum in Russia, where he promised him "a magnificent and, what is more, a cordial hospitality." And when Caulaincourt's silence showed how little such an offer was likely to be accepted, he offered him the sovereignty of the island of Elba, which was not his to

give, but which belonged to France, having been indeed one of the earliest acquisitions made by Napoleon himself. The moment that the offer became known every one discerned the preposterous folly of such a measure, but no one saw how to prevent its adoption. After the Congress at Chatillon had broken up, the British plenipotentiaries had accompanied the allied armies in their march upon Paris; but they were no longer invested with authority even to remonstrate, though from the first they perceived the mischief that must inevitably arise from placing Napoleon close to Italy, where Murat was still king. Talleyrand, under whom a Provisional Government had been established at Paris, was equally clear-sighted as to the consequences, his perceptions being perhaps sharpened by the conviction that not only was the territory thus to be provided for Napoleon to be wrested from France, but that France would also be called on to provide the revenue for the new sovereign. Still, after the offer had been made, no one, even of those who most strongly condemned it, saw how to recall it without still greater mischief. The Czar looked on his honour as pledged to securing its acceptance by the allies; and the Provisional Government in general hardly shared Talleyrand's apprehensions, or, in some instances perhaps, had secretly no great objection to their being realized. Accordingly that part of the arrangement was settled in a few hours by a treaty concluded between the sovereigns of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Napoleon; and when Lord Castlereagh arrived in Paris he could only express the disapproval of himself and his colleagues by warning them emphatically of the danger thus needlessly run, and, according to instructions which he received from the Cabinet, placing his and their objections, as it were, on record by coupling his accession to the treaty with a clause modifying the degree in which it was to be understood to bind his own royal master.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fouché, so long the head of Napoleon's police, felt, or professed to feel, the objections to his being placed at Elba as strongly as any one.

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So manifest indeed was it that neither he nor any other English statesman had contributed to this great political

The alternative which he proposed was a strange one : nor was it less singular that it was to Napoleon himself that he addressed his objections ; while, as his chief object at this time was to ingratiate himself with the Bourbons, he forwarded a transcript of the letter in which he urged them to the Comte d'Artois. He subsequently sent copies of it, and of his note to his Royal Highness, to Lord Liverpool, hoping that his Lordship, "après les avoir lues, serait convaincu que j'ai fait tout ce qui était au pouvoir d'un bon citoyen, à qui il ne restait que l'autorité des conseils pour prévenir les malheurs de la patrie," and the letters are so curious that I subjoin them :

*Copie d'une lettre écrite par le Duc d'Otrante à S.A.R. Monsieur, le  
23 Avril, 1814.*

"MONSEIGNEUR,

"J'ai voulu rendre un dernier service à l'Empereur Napoléon, dont j'ai été dix ans le ministre. Je crois devoir communiquer à V.A.R. la lettre que je viens de lui écrire, ses intérêts ne peuvent être pour moi une chose indifférente, puisqu'ils ont excité la pitié généreuse des puissances qui l'ont vaincu. Mais le plus grand de tous les intérêts pour la France et pour l'Europe, celui auquel on doit tout sacrifier, c'est le repos des peuples et des puissances après tant d'agitations et de malheurs ; et le repos même, alors qu'il serait établi sur de solides bases, ne seroit jamais suffisamment assuré, tant que l'Empereur Napoléon seroit dans l'Ile d'Elbe. Napoléon sur ce rocher seroit pour l'Italie, pour la France, pour toute l'Europe, ce que le Vésuve est à côté de Naples. Je ne vois que le Nouveau Monde et les Etats-Unis auxquels il ne pourra pas donner de secousses," &c.

*Copie de la lettre écrite par le Duc d'Otrante à l'Empereur Napoléon,  
le 23 Avril, 1814, incluse dans la précédente.*

"SIRE,

"Lorsque la France et une partie de l'Europe étoit à vos pieds, j'ai osé vous faire entendre constamment la vérité ; aujourd'hui que vous êtes dans le malheur, je crains bien davantage de vous blesser en vous parlant un langage sincère, mais je vous le dois puisqu'il vous est utile et même nécessaire.

"Vous avez accepté pour retraite l'Ile d'Elbe et sa souveraineté. Je prête une oreille très-attentive à tout ce qu'on dit de cette souveraineté et de cette île. Je crois devoir vous assurer que la situation de cette île dans l'Europe ne convient pas à la vôtre, et que le titre de souverain de quelques arpens de terre convient moins encore à celui qui a possédé un immense empire.

"Je vous prie de peser ces deux considérations, et vous sentirez combien l'une et l'autre sont fondées.

[L'Ile

blunder, that in the brief discussion which in the summer took place in both Houses on the general subject of the peace not one speaker on the Opposition side made the least mention of the treaty with Napoleon as an act for which Lord Castlereagh or the Cabinet was responsible; though the next year, when the mischiefs which had been foreseen had broken out, and the flames of general war

" L'île d'Elbe est assez voisine de l'Afrique, de la Grèce, de l'Espagne; elle touche presque aux côtes de l'Italie et de la France; de cette île la mer, les vents et une scouque peuvent transporter rapidement dans tous les pays les plus exposés à des mouvemens, à des événemens, et à des révolutions. Aujourd'hui il n'y a encore nulle part de stabilité. Dans cette mobilité actuelle des populations, un génie tel que le vôtre donnera toujours des inquiétudes et des soupçons aux puissances. Vous serez accusé sans être coupable, mais sans être coupable vous ferez du mal, car des alarmes sont un grand mal pour les gouvernemens et pour les peuples.

" Le Roi qui va régner sur la France ne voudra régner que par la justice, mais vous savez combien de passions environnent un trône, et combien les haines sont habiles à donner à une calomnie les couleurs d'une vérité.

" Les titres que vous conservez, en rappelant à chaque instant ce que vous avez perdu, ne peuvent servir qu'à rendre vos regrets plus amers. Ils ne paroîtront pas un reste, mais une représentation bien vaine d'un état de grandeur évanoui: je dis plus, sans avoir honneur ils vous exposeront d'avantage. On dira que vous ne gardez ces titres que parce que vous gardez toutes vos prétentions: on dira que le rocher d'Elbe est le point d'appui sur lequel vous placerez les leviers avec lesquels vous chercherez encore à soulever le monde.

" Permettez moi de vous dire ma pensée toute entière; elle est le résultat de mûres réflexions. Il serait plus glorieux et plus consolant pour vous de vivre en simple citoyen; et aujourd'hui l'asile le plus sûr, et le plus convenable pour un homme tel que vous, ce sont les États-Unis d'Amérique.

" Là vous recommencerez votre existence au milieu de ces peuples assez neufs encore: ils sauront admirer votre génie sans le craindre. Vous y serez sous la protection de ces lois égales et inviolables pour tout ce qui respire dans la patrie de Franklin, de Washington, et de Jefferson. Vous prouverez à ces peuples que si vous aviez reçu la naissance au milieu d'eux, vous auriez senti, pensé, et voté comme eux, que vous auriez préféré leurs vertus et leurs libertés, à toutes les dominations de la terre.

" J'ai l'honneur, &c.

Signé, " LE DUC D'OTRANTE."

were again kindled by Napoleon's invasion of France, attempts were made to throw the whole blame on our minister's acquiescence in the arrangement which Alexander had thus concluded; but, as will be seen hereafter, a plain statement of the fact by Lord Liverpool easily and convincingly disposed of the accusation. It is somewhat remarkable, however, that, even after Napoleon had taken possession of his new kingdom, Lord Castlereagh was led to believe that he might not be disinclined to renounce it, and, what is more strange, did not appear to see any insurmountable objection to his being received in England. As late as the 5th of May he wrote from Paris to ask Lord Liverpool's instructions on that question, saying, "General Shuwellof, the Russian commissary, assures me Buonaparte shows no fortitude in his difficulties. If his taste for an asylum in England should continue, would you allow him to reside in some distant province? It would obviate much alarm on the Continent. Joseph, now in Switzerland, has expressly solicited a passport. What am I to say?" Joseph was too insignificant to make it of any importance where he fixed his abode; but that Lord Castlereagh should have thought it possible for the Government to allow Napoleon himself to reside in an English county as a private individual, in which condition no treaty could be made with him, nor could any supervision over his movements be exercised, is a singular instance of the degree in which association with weakness and insincerity can at times undermine the firmness of the most resolute, and bewilder the judgment of the most clear-sighted. There can be no question that Napoleon acquiesced in his removal to Elba on account of his perception from the very first of the facilities which his position there, with the still recognised rank of a sovereign prince, would give him for recovering his power in France at the first favorable opportunity; while any hints which in moments of apparent despondency he may have dropped of his inclination to solicit a refuge in this island proceeded from his theatrical

hypocrisy, which at all times was a strong feature in his character, but which he never attempted to carry into action till every other hope and expedient had failed.

In every other respect but the destination of Napoleon the conclusion of the peace and the manner of it were circumstances of which England and the ministers who governed her destinies might well be proud. In the debate to which allusion has been already made Lord Liverpool had a right to speak of himself, that is to say, of his Administration and his policy, as he did speak, when he said, "In becoming the negotiator of a peace he always wished to consider himself as the arbiter of the different interests at stake, and as forming his decision on a fair and comprehensive view of the circumstances and claims of all the parties." And certainly, at the close of a war of so unprecedented a magnitude, thus to be the arbiter of the conditions on which it was to be terminated, was a glorious position for England to assume. It was not only because, while all the other countries of Europe had been repeatedly stricken down, she alone had neither defeat to avenge nor loss to retrieve; nor because her superior wealth and liberality had made her the paymaster of the alliance: but rather because it was not more incontestable that her triumphs had been won by her warriors than that they had been foreseen by her statesmen; that they had flowed directly from a policy well conceived and steadily adhered to; and, above all things, because the language now held by the Prime Minister, magnanimous and disinterested as it was, was well known to express the real feelings with which England had from the first approached and carried out the great work of pacification. So far was she from regarding with rancour the foe with whom she had been so long contending, that she not only restored to France almost all the colonies that she had wrested from her during the war, but even interfered with effect with the allies to procure for her, in this her hour of weakness and lowest humiliation, some additions to her territory which



would not have been unimportant had they been trophies and prizes of successful warfare, but which were now freely given to her, not as consolations for her defeat, but as a just recognition of claims which it was felt that she had a right to advance, and to which, therefore, it was justice, and therefore it was wisdom, to listen. And in other matters also, being partly influenced by a desire to smooth the difficulties of the restored dynasty, Britain forbore to press claims of her own which invariable precedent would have authorised her to enforce, as may be seen in the following letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Castlereagh; for, though that minister had authority to settle at his own discretion questions that required instant decision, on all others he consulted and received his directions from the Prime Minister:

Fife House, May 19th, 1814.

MY DEAR CASTLEREAGH,

In a letter which I wrote to you some time ago I directed your attention to the large sum of money due from the French Government to the British for the maintenance of prisoners of war.

You are of course aware that an article to liquidate these debts has usually been inserted in all treaties of peace. I do not believe that in the present case such an article would be likely to give us the money, and certainly could not give it without material pressure and inconvenience to the French Government. It occurred to me, therefore, that there might be some grace in abandoning it, and that the honour of the French Government might, perhaps, be saved on some other points, by a formal relinquishment of this claim in an article of the treaty.

I can assure you that I feel sincerely desirous to see the credit of the French Government upheld, as far as we can contribute to it, without the sacrifice of our public principles or of our essential interests.

You will see that we have lost no time in returning an answer to your despatch by Robinson.

I trust the extravagant pretensions they have brought forward on the subject of the fisheries can raise no serious difficulty. We are



ready to place them in this respect where they were in 1792, and that is all they can expect from us. In short, we demand nothing which is of any value to them except the Mauritius; for there is not a Frenchman in the island of Tobago, and the only value of Ste. Lucie is its port, which they do not want, having a much better in Martinique. Our moderation, indeed, is great compared with that of any of our allies. This consideration cannot too often be brought under the view of the French Government. I am anxious on this account, I must confess, for the signature of the peace, as I am confident that both Great Britain and France will be able to speak with much more authority on many points when all our respective difficulties are adjusted.

Yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

It was no unimportant sum that we thus forbore to exact, for the French prisoners in England fell but little short of 70,000 men, while those whom Napoleon had taken from us, and whose expenses therefore the French Government was entitled to set against their maintenance, were but insignificant in number; so that the lowest calculation would have entitled the Ministry to demand some millions of money,<sup>1</sup> which could certainly not have been provided without causing the greatest embarrassment to Louis XVIII., for whom every necessity to impose a fresh tax on his people was in fact a compulsion to court an unpopularity which at such a moment he could not afford to encounter. At the same time, on questions of greater importance than money, such as the Slave-trade, Lord Liverpool did not abstain from enforcing his own views on the new French Ministry; and his conduct on this subject does him the greatest honour, because, as will be remembered, he had not originally been convinced of the duty of abolishing it even in our own colonies:

<sup>1</sup> The exact number of French prisoners is stated by Alison at 67,360 in England, besides a few hundreds abroad; and the expense of maintaining them was estimated at 100,000*l.* a month.

Fife House, May 19th, 1814.

MY DEAR CASTLEREAGH,

I foresee that we shall have most serious difficulties on the subject of the article relative to the Slave-trade in this country ; and I am sincerely of opinion that the French Government have taken a mistaken view of their own interest in this question.

If they were prepared to say that they had no intention of agreeing to the abolition of the Slave-trade, considering the continuance of that traffic as indispensable to their colonies, their policy would be intelligible ; but if they are prepared, as appears by your communication, to condemn the principle of the trade, and to stipulate for its eventual abolition, I am convinced they would have less embarrassment in abolishing it immediately than at the end of three or five years.

I wish you to consider that the Slave-trade has now been abolished, with regard to their colonies, for the last six or seven years, as well as with respect to our own. That the immediate abolition would be only a continuance, therefore, of a system which now exists, and to which, for a considerable space of time, they have been accustomed. But if they were to suffer the Slave-trade to revive as to their own colonies, if they are to permit the inhabitants of those colonies again to taste of the advantages of that trade, the Government will, at the end of the period, have to meet it as a new question ; speculations will have been formed which will be disappointed ; new capital will be embarked in consequence, which cannot be withdrawn without great loss and inconvenience ; and they will have all the clamours to meet, not only of the West India colonists, but of the merchants and inhabitants of the sea-port towns who may embark their capital in the trade to Africa. In short, it appears to me to be much more easy and prudent to continue the abolition than to revive the trade, and abolish it a few years hence.

I wish you would bring these considerations seriously under the view of the Government. If they are weighed dispassionately, I am satisfied they will be found to be just.

I cannot but hope that the prejudice which exists upon this subject has been hastily imbibed, and that if the French Government would avow the principle upon which they are

disposed to act, and state it to be a policy which they had adopted in conjunction with Great Britain, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, the difficulties which they suppose they would have to encounter would in a great measure vanish.

Might not their feelings in some degree be reconciled to the question if it was made a part of the stipulation in the treaty, that we should restore the colonies to Holland upon the condition that the Slave-trade should be abolished by the Prince of Orange in the same manner as by the British and French Government?

Yours, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

Lord Liverpool had indeed now become so zealous an abolitionist, that, when he found the French Government hung back, he expressed himself willing to purchase their assent even by the sacrifice of a West Indian island, if necessary. But the general feeling of France set so strongly the other way that Louis and his ministers feared to oppose themselves to it. And, with reference to their position, Lord Liverpool thought it impolitic to insist too positively on the point; on which, indeed, no one nation had either power or right to compel the agreement of another. The question, however, was discussed more at length in the winter at Vienna; when the perseverance of our ministers was rewarded by a success which was almost complete. On most other subjects Lord Liverpool's views were at once adopted. And, though portions of his correspondence of this date have unfortunately been lost, enough remains to show how careful was the supervision which he exercised over every point of the diplomatic arrangements which ensued on the reduction of France to her former limits, and how shrewd and correct was the judgment which he formed on them. Among the articles of the definitive treaty, one of necessity had reference to Holland, which some years before Napoleon had erected into a kingdom for his brother Louis; and, when by his tyrannical inter-

ference he had driven him to the abdication of the crown which he had bestowed on him, had finally annexed to his own empire. It was now settled that it was to be restored to the dignity of a separate monarchy, enriched by the addition of the greater part of the Flemish provinces, which had formerly belonged to Austria, and placed under the sovereignty of the Prince of Orange. But, though he consented to the arrangement, Lord Liverpool from the first saw the objections to which it was liable; arising partly from the difference of religion, which must almost inevitably embarrass an union between Protestant and Roman Catholic provinces, and partly from the partiality, having its source in religious sympathy, of the Belgian provinces for a connexion with France. And in a letter to Lord Clancarty, our ambassador at the Hague, he foreshadowed some of the dangers which at no remote period led to the dissolution of the new kingdom:

*Private.*

Fife House, May 30th, 1814.

MY DEAR LORD,

. . . . I hope you are going on well with your business at Paris. I will own to you that I am under serious apprehensions on account of the views of some of the Prince of Orange's councillors upon the policy to be adopted upon the union of the Austrian Netherlands to Holland. Depend upon it, it will require the utmost management and indulgence to reconcile the people of Brabant to this connection. A new connection cannot be governed with as tight a rein as an old one. Recollect how Ireland is governed now, and what lost America to the crown of Great Britain. The danger with respect to the Low Countries must be viewed as particularly formidable when their proximity to France is considered. A considerable party in France will for some time cast a longing look upon that country. The habits and prejudices of the Brabantes, though not friendly to the French, approach nevertheless nearer to them than they do to those of the Dutch; and I am satisfied that the only chance the Prince of Orange will have of con-

solidating the connection between his new subjects and his old ones will arise from his making it quite clear to the former that it is their interest to be under the dominion of the Prince of Orange rather than under that of the King of France. The Dutch must be taught that Brabant is a most important out-work for the security of Holland, and that, if they do not choose to bring the danger to their own doors, they must pay something for keeping it at a distance.

Believe me, &c.

LIVERPOOL.

*To the* EARL OF CLANCARTY.

The proximity to France, which he thus regarded as a temptation to one considerable party in the Netherlands, was, in fact, the moving cause of the revolution which sixteen years afterwards severed the nations then united. And if, as seems to be the case, no one but Lord Liverpool foresaw this now, the accuracy of his judgment is the more remarkable and creditable.

END OF VOL. I.

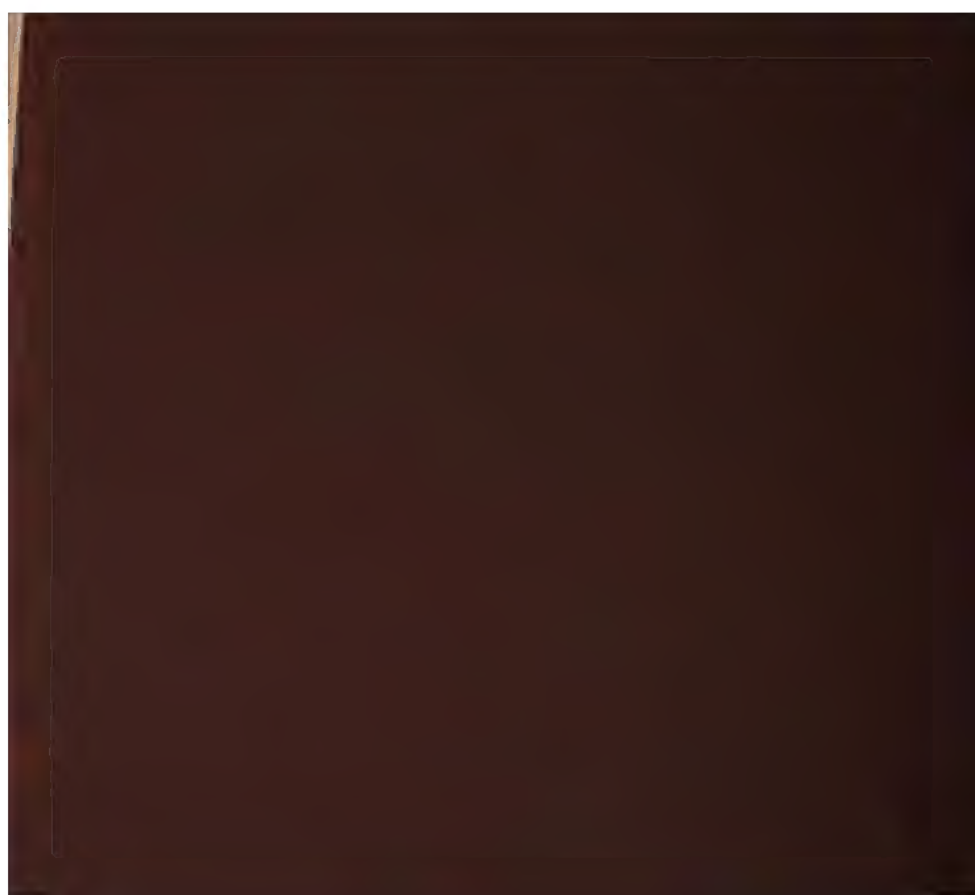
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